Winx Club Infinite Loops

By: Firehawk242

The World Tree Yggdrasil is broken. Time is looping back on itself infinitely. But some people are aware of this. Welcome to the Infinite Loops, Winx Edition.

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Chapter 1

Welcome to the Winx Club Infinite Loops Compilation! This is a compilation of the snippets for the Winx Club branch of the Infinite Loops written on the Spacebattles forum.

For those not familiar with the Infinite Loops, a quick tutorial:

The Multiverse is a computer system which is also a tree called Yggdrasil. A long time ago, something happened to the tree that put it in danger of destruction. To conduct repairs, it and all the universes contained within were placed into a safe mode. This safe mode is the Infinite Loops.

Looping Mechanics:

1. One person in a Loop, often the main character, is an Anchor. They are the person who first starts time looping.

2. There is always at least one Anchor present in a given Time Loop snippet, though it may not be the local one.

3. The standard pattern for a loop is that the Anchor (and whoever else is Looping there) come to awareness in a loop at a particular point in the story. From there, events will play out as influenced by the Loopers present, acting with the benefit of their foreknowledge, until either a predetermined end point is reached or all the Loopers have copped it.

4. To be Awake is to be aware of the time loops (that is, to have gone back in time this time.)

5. The Anchor is the only character guaranteed to be Awake. Even after others have started looping, it is mostly random as to whether they will be Awake this particular loop.

6. Crossovers, fusions, and alternate pasts can also take place. It is perfectly possible, for example, to have the characters Awaken into a loop which conforms to a fanfic universe rather than reality.

7. Loops do not have to be in chronological order, but it is strongly preferred that they not require a mutually contradictory order (where A must be before B and B must be before A.)

8. Just about every Looper is very, very stir crazy.

The loop currently only goes through to the end of the Secret of the Lost Kingdom. This is liable to change.

Any loops not written by me will have their author's screen name in parenthesis next to the loop number. Let's get going.

Loop 1.1

Flora Awoke as she was unpacking her things in the familiar dorm room. She blinked rapidly in confusion. What just happened? Had she been daydreaming? Or maybe this was the dream? She had two conflicting sets of memories at war in her head. On the one hand, she had just arrived at Alfea and was unpacking her things. She was sixteen, and had only recently achieved her first fairy transformation. Looking around her, this seemed like it was true. But the other memories were so strong. She was nineteen, an Alfea graduate, a member of the Winx Club, an Enchantix fairy, and a member of the new Company of Light that had just freed Domino from the Ancestral's curse.

She shook her head. She would have to talk to Miss Faragonda about this. She was clearly unwell. Still, she'd been feeling fine last she knew. At least, she was pretty sure she'd been feeling fine. She shook her head again. The memories refused to resolve themselves. She had to figure out which were the real ones.

She delved inwards, feeling for her magic. If those three years really had happened, she should be feeling... Yes, she was. She really was an Enchantix fairy. But then, why was she-

The door opened, cutting off her thoughts. Bloom stepped through, looking sixteen again and not helping Flora's confusion in the slightest. A sense of deja vu swept over Flora.

"Wait, sorry, I left some of my things scattered around," Flora said, just before Bloom could step on her talking plant. She came over to greet her old friend. New friend. Something. "Hi there."

"Hi, um, I'm Bloom," Bloom said.

"Ah-hem," Stella coughed, coming in behind the red head.

"I mean, Bloom's a name I like a lot, but it's not my name," Bloom said, backtracking.

"Yes it is," Flora said gently. "Don't worry sweetie, your secret's safe with me. I'm Flora."

"You really mean that?" Bloom asked.

"Of course, Varanda of Callisto," Flora said. "I won't tell anyone." Of course, if her memories were right, she wouldn't have to. Stella couldn't keep a secret to save her life, and the entire story would be out by the end of the day.

"Callisto?" Techna's voice came from outside the dorm. "Fourth world of Magic Realm's upper ring? Wow! That's quite a ways away. Hi, my name's Techna."

Flora watched as her friends reintroduced themselves to each other. It was like they'd never met before. Or maybe they hadn't? She considered the possibilities. The first possibility was that she'd somehow seen the future, but she was no seer or oracle. That seemed unlikely. The second possibility was that this was all some

sort of dream or illusion. She gently let out a little of her magic, not enough to be noticed, but enough to tell her that she wasn't in some sort of illusion. That left dreaming, but that was starting to seem very unlikely. The last possibility was that she had somehow traveled through time. That seemed like the most improbable of all, but upon further consideration, it was the only thing that fit.

Flora's thoughts were interrupted by the scream of her talking plant as it dangled Bloom's rabbit by one foot. "Plant, put Kiko down," Flora said.

"No Flora, don't scold your plant," Bloom said. "Kiko probably tried to eat it."

Flora went and picked up an empty flower pot and a packet of magical carrot seeds, once again feeling an extreme sense of deja vu. "Here, you hungry, little bunny?" she asked, using her magic and the seeds to create a group of carrots for the rabbit.

Stella once again suggested they eat out, and Flora decided to play along. Until she could talk to Faragonda, she'd do her best not to disturb the timeline.

The fight with the Trix started again, just as Flora remembered. For a moment she panicked. If she went full Enchantix she'd completely ruin the timeline before she could figure out what was going on! Still... there was something in her magic... It had been a long time since she'd used this transformation, but she could still remember how it went. She was still more powerful than she really should have been, but at least this way she wasn't obvious about it.

The battle was short, humiliating, and painful. The fact that Flora most likely could have defeated all three of the Trix by herself only made it worse, but she had to preserve the timeline until she knew more.

Stella once again accidentally outed Bloom to the rest of the girls. Flora did her best to pretend to be surprised, but she'd never been much of an actress. Still, none of the others questioned her. They were too busy dealing with Bloom and Stella.

"Heh-hem!" Griselda coughed, advancing on the suddenly cornered young fairies. "Do you have any idea what time it is?"

"Young ladies, we were worried sick!" Faragonda said. "Go to bed immediately, we'll discuss the rules again tomorrow."

"Not so fast, Princess Varanda," Griselda said stopping Bloom. "Isn't there something you forgot to tell us?"

Flora watched as Bloom revealed her true name and home world to Faragonda and Griselda. Just like in her memories.

"Now, go to bed," Faragonda said. "And don't make any more noise."

As the rest of the still nameless Winx trooped inside, Flora hung back.

"Miss Faragonda?" she asked.

"Yes Flora?" Faragonda said. "Shouldn't you be going to bed?"

"There's something I need to talk to you about."

"Surely it can wait until morning," Griselda said.

"I'm sorry, but it can't," Flora said. "Just... watch." She transformed into her basic fairy form. "Charmix!" she exclaimed. The familiar filigree broach and handbag appeared.

"I see," Miss Faragonda said. "Well done, Flora, not many fairies your age have their Charmix."

"It's more than that, Miss Faragonda," Flora said as she went back to her normal form. "Enchantix!" The even more familiar wings, gloves, and sandals of her Enchantix form appeared. She drifted back to the ground, landing in front of her gobsmacked teachers.

"Flora, when did you get your Enchantix?" Faragonda asked.

"Almost three years in the future," Flora said. "Miss Faragonda, I think I may have traveled back in time."

"Perhaps we should take this to my office," Faragonda said.

"So you do not know how you came back in time?" Faragonda asked.

Flora shook her head. "So far I've tried to avoid changing things as much as possible so I don't destroy the future."

"Flora, if you were sent back in time, there's a reason for it," Faragonda said. "You were sent back because you were meant to be sent back. You shouldn't try to force events to go the same as they did in your future. No matter what happened before, this is your life. You decide what to do."

"But what if I make a mistake and ruin everyone's futures?" Flora asked.

"Flora, there is more than one path to a happy future," Faragonda said. "You have been given the power to decide which path to take, but no matter what you do, I am certain you will choose well."

"Thank you, Miss Faragonda," Flora said. "Um, if you don't mind, can I stay a normal student? I've already taken all the classes, but I'd like to stay with my friends."

"Of course," Faragonda said. "Now run along to bed, and don't worry. The future will attend to itself."

"Hey Flora, did you get lost?" Musa asked as Flora opened the door to the dorm.

"Sorry, Miss Faragonda wanted to talk to me. It wasn't important," Flora said.

"Well that's good," Techna said. "Bloom has come up with a name for the five of us."

"Winx!" Bloom said. "What do you think?"

"I like it," Flora said.

"That settles it then," Bloom said. "We're the Winx!"

Flora smiled. She was home.

Loop 1.2

"I don't care if you don't like guns," the woman known as Commander Shepard said. "Flora, if you're going to be a part of my team, you're going to learn how to use a gun."

"But-" Flora began.

"No!" Shepard said. "You may not just use your powers! I've seen you try, and it didn't end well. And those husks weren't even all that dangerous! I am not interested in spending my entire loop rescuing you, so you are going to learn to use a gun, and you are going to like it!"

"...can we go back to the talk about the tree and the multiverse?" Flora asked. "I liked that conversation better."

Shepard covered her eyes with her hand. "So did I kid. It was a lot less frustrating. Now pick a gun and learn to use it."

"So, loop's almost over," Shepard said. "Have you finally kicked that silly phobia of yours?"

"I still don't like guns," Flora said, looking at the M-96 Mattock assault rifle she was holding. "But..."

"Say it," Shepard said. "Say it."

"...but I really like this one," Flora said with a sigh.

"Good," Shepard said. "The next time I see you, you'd better have it with you."

"Yes, Ma'am," Flora said.

Loop 1.3

"What a pity you had to meet us," Icy said, scraping her talons across the ice encasing Bloom. "Sweet little fairy-"

"Leave her alone," Flora said. "Try me instead."

"You mean us, right Flora?" Stella asked.

"Pathetic," Icy said. "Nut! Attack!" The ogre charged.

There was a flash and three fairies stood facing the witches.

"Where's Flora?" Techna asked.

"Enchantix!" Flora ahouted. Both sides could only stare in shock at the Guardian Fairy who had suddenly appeared in their midst.

"Flora?" Musa asked.

"Return To Nature!" Flora announced, blasting Nut with green energy from her hands. He went airborne and vanished into the distance.

"It doesn't matter if you're an Enchantix fairy," Icy said. "We're still the Trix! Ice Spiral!" Icicles flew towards Flora.

"Nature Dust!" Flora said. The icicles vanished into a spray of flowers. "Liana Chain!" Vines sprouted from the ground and bound the Trix, leaving them helpless and immobile. "Now think about what you've done," Flora said, walking over to where Bloom was encased in ice.

"We'll get you back for this!" Stormy said, struggling to escape from Flora's magic.

Flora ignored the witches, instead focusing on her frozen friend. "Fairy Dust!" she shouted, pulling the small bottle of her necklace and anointing Bloom with it. The dark spell holding her in the ice broke down under the power of the dust, releasing a shivering Bloom. "Are you alright, Bloom?" Flora asked.

"I'm fine," Bloom said through chattering teeth.

"Stella, warm her up," Flora said. "Stella?"

The other three fairies were staring at her in shock. "Who are you?" Musa demanded.

"Flora," Flora said. "Guardian Fairy of Nature, and your friend. I'll explain everything when we get back to Alfea, but right now Bloom needs our help. Stella?"

"Right," Stella said.

"Bloom?" Techna asked. "But that's Princess Varanda."

"No it isn't," Flora said. "She's Bloom from Earth."

"How did you know that?" Stella asked, channeling her magic into Bloom.

"I know a lot of things," Flora said. "I'll talk to Miss Faragonda about this for you, Bloom. I'm sure she'll let you stay."

"Oh thanks Flora," Bloom said. "You're the best!"

"What are friends for?" Flora asked. She hoped one of her friends started looping soon. It was getting rather lonely looping alone.

Loop 1.4

Flora stood hidden in the shadows outside of Bloom's house on Earth. Once again, Bloom had discovered that Sky was engaged to Diaspro and promptly fled to Earth. Actually, that raised a good question. Why was Bloom even with Sky in the first place? He'd lied to her about his identity, lied to her about being engaged, led her on into a relationship while he was engaged, and would eventually prove himself completely faithless by dumping Diaspro for Bloom, as usual. He really wasn't worth it in Flora's opinion. Oh well, Bloom liked him, and she was pretty sure he'd proposed to her at the dance near the end of the loop. Of course, she wasn't confident he'd have treated his new fiancee any better than his previous one, but there was always a chance. And she was losing focus. She had a mission to complete.

Bloom arrived, as expected, and discovered the Trix inside, holding her parents hostage. And Flora still waited. She had to time this perfectly if she was going to get what she wanted from the evening.

The Trix's pet ogre attacked Bloom, knocking her out of the house and onto the street. Bloom transformed and thrashed the ogre without breaking a sweat. As expected. And still Flora waited.

The Trix emerged and engaged Bloom in a dogfight over the city. Flora took this as her cue to slip into the house, carefully evading notice from anyone, Bloom's parents included. She took position in the next room over, where she could easily cover the entry way. She

pulled out her rifle and loaded it, quickly checking it one last time to make sure it was ready for action.

Several minutes passed as the Trix and Bloom no doubt battled across the sky. Why were they doing this in the open on Earth anyways? They should all know not to use magic in sight of the magic-less humans. Well, they certainly knew, Flora thought. The trouble was that the Trix probably didn't care. She took a deep breath. If she wanted this to end the way she had planned, she had to stay focused.

The Trix reappeared and dangled Bloom's parents over a vortex. And still Flora waited. Bloom returned and was swiftly defeated and encased in ice. The Trix advanced on her. This was the moment Flora was waiting for. Just a little longer...

The Trix revealed the secret of Bloom's heritage and the source of her powers. Then they summoned the Vacuums to steal her power.

Flora made her move. She shifted slightly, bringing her gun up into a firing position. Three bullets flew through the air, shattering the crystals the Trix had summoned.

"Hands where I can see them!" Flora said, pointing her gun at the Trix. Icy, Darcy, and Stormy stared at her, naked fury plain in their eyes. Flora cheered inwardly. After dealing with their smug superiority so many times, so very many times, it was cathartic to see them completely lose their composure like this. To be thwarted so completely just moments before their ultimate triumph. Flora smiled. She'd needed this.

Loop 1.5

"Heh-hem," the red haired woman replacing Griselda coughed. "Do you have any idea what time it is?"

"Young ladies, we were worried sick!" Faragonda said. "Go to bed immediately, we'll discuss the rules again tomorrow."

Flora watched, waiting out the old song and dance as Bloom's identity was revealed for what might very well be the thousandth time. Next time she would try to get Bloom busted before they even made it out of the school. It would be interesting to see what changes, if any, that had on the timeline. This time however, she had an old friend to greet.

"Now, go to bed," Faragonda said. "And don't make any more noise."

"Wait," Commander Shepard said. "I need to speak to Miss Flora about something first. The rest of you hurry off to bed."

Shepard pulled Flora over to a quiet corner of the quad. "I told you we'd meet again."

"You did," Flora said.

"Well, soldier, do you still have your weapon?"

"Yes ma'am," Flora said.

"Has it been damaged?"

"No ma'am."

"Have you been properly maintaining it?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Show me."

"Yes ma'am," Flora said, pulling her rifle from her pocket and handing it to Shepard.

"Looks good," Shepard said after performing a quick field strip. "Do you still know how to use it?"

"Yes ma'am," Flora said. "I've stayed in practice."

"Good," Shepard said with a smile. "You've done very well Flora."

"Thank you," Flora said.

"In fact, you've done so well I have a present for you."

"A present?"

"Yes Flora," Shepard said with a grin. "Since you took so well to this gun, I thought I'd give you another." She pulled out a pistol. "This is an M-5 Phalanx. Take good care of it."

"Yes ma'am," Flora said, turning a little green as she quickly placed her new gun in her Pocket.

"Now, this is what your world's like, huh?" Shepard asked.

"Just Alfea, and Magix," Flora said. "I'm actually from Linphea."

"Oh that's right, I forgot," Shepard said. "So, everyone has magic here."

"Yes. You're one of the teachers."

"I realize that," Shepard said. "Well, how about you come visit me tomorrow. I'd like to see what this magic can really do."

"Yes, ma'am!" Flora said with enthusiasm.

Loop 1.6

Flora officially hated this loop. So far she'd been shot, turned into a vampire, stabbed repeatedly by a crazed Catholic priest, suffered numerous indignities at the hands of the demented vampire who was her new boss, been called Police Girl so many times that she'd just given up on teaching anyone her real name, and now their

headquarters was under attack by a pair of even more demented vampires leading an army of ghouls. And of course, Flora thought, looking at the thing she was holding, the universe had given her yet another gun. She didn't like guns. She never wanted to like guns. Still, she had to admit, the Harkonnen was a very nice gun. In any case, she and the butler Walter had gone out to confront one of the vampires attacking the mansion.

She really didn't like this loop.

"Police girl, if you may?" Walter said.

Flora sighed and stared down the sights of her nice new gun. She was tempted to quote what her boss had said when he requisitioned, or rather extorted, this gun for her, but she refrained. She took aim and pulled the trigger, mowing down half a dozen armored vampire zombies.

Using the police training she'd gotten from her loop memories, Flora tackled the vampire to the ground and pinned him. Walter attempted to interrogate him, but he was nothing if not defiant. And profane, which Flora did not enjoy, but mostly just defiant.

A noise startled her and the man escaped from her hold. He sprang about like the demented lunatic he was, acting as if he was merely putting on a show. "And now for the upcoming company picnic." Ghouls wearing the uniform of Hellsing's security forces appeared in the doorway. "Unfortunately all your douchebag coworkers are bringing is their own rotten flesh. Still better than potato salad if you ask me. Now, if'n you don't mind, imma go eat that Hellsing b**ch!" He jumped over them and hurried towards the conference room.

Flora let him go. She had other problems to worry about. The army of ghouls was bearing down on her and Walter. She considered her options for a moment. The people from this world would certainly kill these ghouls, but Flora couldn't bring herself to do it. These were

people she'd worked with, and even if they were ghouls, they were still them. She couldn't do it.

"Police girl, take them out," Walter said.

No. She was done with this loop. Done with its blood, its misery, and its death. It was time to start playing by her own rules. "Enchatix!" Flora shouted.

"Ah, and just like that, everything turned out alright in the end," Alucard said.

"Yes, everything turned out just fine," Sir Integra said. "Except that ninety percent of our staff were killed, turned into ghouls, then resurrected by the Police Girl when she grew wings and threw glitter and them, and now she has her own personal cult."

There was a moment of silence as Alucard processed this. "...What."

Flora held one of the men she'd saved as he tearfully thanked her. She smiled gently as he slowly stopped sobbing from relief. She'd done some real good here. Maybe this loop wouldn't be so bad after all.

Loop 1.7

While the other girls were eating, Flora slipped away into the city of Magix. She called upon her new vampiric side and her body began to change slightly. Her teeth lengthened into fangs, her hair grew a little wilder, and her eyes turned red. She let her senses expand, bringing her information of the city around her. Information of her prey. She calmly suppressed the urge to hunt. She didn't need blood. She was after something a bit more important.

Her ears brought her the familiar voices she was listening for. She faded into darkness and drifted through the shadows to where the three witches were waiting for their ogre.

"Where is he?" Icy demanded.

"Boo," Flora said, coming up behind them and reverting to her human form.

The Trix whirled in shock. "Who are you?" Darcy demanded.

"How did she sneak up on us like that?" Stormy asked, alarmed.

"Rather easily, actually," Flora said.

"Alright, you've made your point," Icy said. "What do you want?"

"You three are searching for the Dragon Fire," Flora said. It was not a question.

"Yes..." Icy said cautiously.

"You will abandon your search immediately."

"Why would we do that?" Stormy demanded.

"Because if you don't, I will start feeling... unreasonable," Flora said.

"You think your little threats scare us?" Darcy asked. "You're just a freshman fairy from Alfea, aren't you?"

"True," Flora said. "But that's not all I am." She shifted fully into her vampire form, her power forming a cloud of black menace around her. The three witches each took a step back, their faces turning pale. "Now, you were just about to abandon that search of yours, weren't you?"

"Y-y-y-yes mistress," Icy said. "Anything you say!"

"Very good," Flora said with a cheerfully fanged smile. "You should probably be headed back to Cloud Tower about now."

"Yes mistress!" the witches chorused, vanishing in a flash of light.

Flora transitioned back to her human form. It was amazing how much conflict she'd just prevented by simply showing a little fang. She started off to rejoin her friends, whistling a happy tune to herself.

Loop 1.8

On some level, Flora probably should have found loops like this disturbing. Being the wrong gender for a few years should be, if nothing else, then at least very confusing, but for some reason it never bothered Flora. She was a specialist named Flynn this loop. And that was that. No fuss, no confusion, no complaints, it simply was. What she found rather more confusing was the Timmy also appeared to have changed gender to replace her on the Winx. That was rather strange. Still, she could live with it. Of course, that meant she'd ended up with yet another gun, but at least this one used rather sanitary magical bullets, rather than the metal and gunpowder most of her guns used. Next time she was in a fight, she was tempted to bring out the Harkonnen, just to see what the reactions would be.

"Hey Flynn, are you going to just stand there all night?" Brandon, masquerading as Sky, asked, interrupting her thoughts.

"Huh?" Flora asked, looking up.

"Come on," Brandon said. "This is the dance! Go dance with someone!"

"I don't really..." Flora trailed off.

"Come on," Brandon said, taking her by the arm. "In you go!" He pulled her towards the crowd. She stumbled, then collided with

another person and they both went down.

"I'm sorry," Flora said. "My friend decided I need to find someone to dance with, and he-"

"Pushed you?" Techna asked. "It's alright, my friends just did the same thing."

"Are you alright?" Flora asked, getting to her feet and extending a hand to help Techna do the same.

"I'm fine," Techna said, taking the offered hand.

"I suspect our friends won't give up until we find someone to dance with," Flora said with a sigh.

"Well then, there's only one logical solution," Techna said.

"What's that?" Flora asked.

"We can dance with each other," Techna said.

Flora blushed a bit. "Are you sure?"

"Of course," Techna said as they began to dance. "It's only logical."

"Right," Flora said. She looked at Techna as they danced. This felt weird, but not in a bad way. In fact she kind of liked it. Maybe this wasn't a bad thing at all.

"Fand," Frigg said, staring over the fairy admin's shoulder. "Why do you feel the need to ship everyone in your loop?"

"Because it's fun!" Fand said. "You should try it some time! Don't you have that cute couple of loopers in your loop? See if you can set them up together."

"I do not involve myself in the personal lives of my loopers," Frigg said.

"Awww, you're no fun," Fand said.

"We clearly have different definitions of the word 'fun'," Frigg said.

Loop 1.9

"Callisto?" Techna said once again. "Fourth world of Magic Realm's upper ring? Wow! That's quite a ways away. Hi, my name's Techna." Then she deviated from the script. "Wait, what did you say your name was?"

"B- Varanda?" Bloom said.

"No, not you," Techna said.

"Stella?" Stella asked.

"Not you either."

"Hi, I'm Flora," Flora said.

Techna looked rather alarmed. "Flora, can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Sure," Flora said, walking past Bloom and Stella, who shared a shrug.

"Thank you," Techna said, leading them off towards a private alcove.

This could be it! Flora thought. It seemed like Techna was looping! She'd been waiting so long for someone else to join her! "What did you want to talk to me about?" Flora asked.

"Who are you and where's Tina?" Techna asked. "And what do you know about this time travel?"

Flora's breath caught for a moment as joy overwhelmed her. "Oh Techna, this is wonderful, you're finally looping! I've been waiting for this for ages!"

"Where is Tina?" Techna asked again.

"Tina?" Flora asked, confused for a moment. Then it hit her and she went pale. "Oh Techna, I am so sorry, I didn't realize- I should have- I'm so sorry."

"What are you sorry about?" Techna asked. "And where is Tina?"

"Um..." Flora said. "Tina's at Red Fountain. She's a boy named Timmy. Do you... remember a Specialist named Flynn?"

"Of course I remember Flynn, he-" Techna cut off as her brain worked through the logic chain. "You're Flynn."

"Yes."

"The specialist I spent three years dating."

"Yes."

"Explain."

"Well it all starts with this computer that is also a tree called Yggdrasil..."

"So you're the Anchor," Techna said. "And you're usually a girl."

"Yes," Flora said.

"How long have you been... looping?"

"Hundreds of loops, each about three years long," Flora said. "I'm still a young looper though. Commander Shepard told me there are

loopers who've been looping for untold millions, maybe billions, or even trillions, of loops."

"And you've been to other universes?" Techna asked.

"Yes. My first was the one with Commander Shepard. My most recent resulted in me becoming a vampire."

"You're a vampire?" Techna asked.

"Only when I want to be," Flora said. "It's rather helpful though."

"I see," Techna said. "I... I guess I have one more question."

"Yes Techna?" Flora asked.

"When you were Flynn, and we were dating..." Techna's voice caught, but she pushed through. "Did you really love me, or was that all just an act?"

"Of course I loved you," Flora said gently. "I still do."

"Then... can I try something?" Techna asked.

"Sure," Flora said.

Techna grabbed Flora and pulled her in for a kiss. After a moment, she broke off, shaking her head. "It's just not the same."

"I suppose not," Flora said.

"I'm sorry Flynn, I mean, Flora," Techna said. "I just don't think I can do this."

"It's alright," Flora said. "We can still be friends."

"I think I'd like that," Techna said. "So what now?"

"Welcome to the Multiverse, Techna," Flora said. "It's nice to see you again."

Loop 1.10

"Where are we?" Techna asked.

"Shepard told me about this," Flora said. "I think this is the Hub."

"The Hub?"

"Yggdrasil's ultimate backup file," Flora said. "All the other loops can be found as fiction in this world."

"That includes us?" Techna asked.

"Of course."

"Winx Club," Flora said. "Apparently it's named after us."

"I'm assuming this is baseline?" Techna asked.

"It should be," Flora said.

"Good," Techna said. "It'll be nice to find out what happened the first time."

"I did say I was sorry," Flora said.

"Flora?" Techna asked. "The loop ends here. Why are there three more seasons?"

"It looks like there's another one coming out soon, too," Flora said. "Shepard told me about things like this. Sometimes loops expand."

"So these new seasons are our future?" Techna asked.

"I think so," Flora said.

"So that's what our future's like," Techna said, looking up from the notes she'd taken. "Interesting. Although I do wonder how that second movie fits into the timeline."

"Maybe it's a variant?" Flora suggested, looking up from her magazine.

"Flora? Are you... reading a gun magazine?" Techna asked, shocked.

"What? No!" Flora said, blushing as she put her magazine out of sight. "Of course not!"

"Flora."

"...Okay, yes. But just for research!"

"Research?" Techna asked, one eyebrow raised in disbelief.

"I keep ending up in loops where I'm given a gun," Flora said. "I thought I should know a bit more about them."

"And that's your only reason for reading it," Techna said with a voice that could have sucked the moisture out of a swimming pool.

"Yes!" Flora said a bit too quickly. "That's my only reason!"

"Whatever you say, Flora," Techna said. "Whatever you say."

Author's Notes:

1.2: Flora's first fused loop. Mass Effect, for those who didn't recognize it. Also the beginning of a very guilty pleasure.

1.3: Loopers tend to get more powerful as they age. Flora's still an Enchantix fairy at this point, but she's far stronger than a normal Enchantix fairy would be.

1.4: Could you put up with the Trix for centuries?

1.5: Yes, this is a running joke. No, it's not going away any time soon.

1.6: Yggdrasil inflicts a Hellsing Abridged loop on Flora.

1.7: Flora inflicts her Hellsing Abridged loop on the Trix.

1.8: Fand, the Queen of Fairies is the Admin (programmer) for the Winx Loops. She's an unrepentant shipper, which means she's rather benign by admin standards. Frigg runs the Nanoha Loops next door.

1.9: The Infinite Loops! Creating awkward situations since time immemorial! Also, Techna's awake.

1.10: The Hub is basically a copy of the real world. It's not actually reality of course, but it's functionally identical.

That's about it! More loops to come!

Chapter 2

A bit more loop terminology.

Pockets and Pings: The two standard looper abilities.

Almost every looper has their own Pocket, a personal subspace pocket that's basically connected to the looper's soul, and is the primary way for loopers to hold onto physical objects between loops. Younger, weaker loopers have smaller pockets and can only carry a few objects inside them. Elder loopers, especially the seven original loopers, have been known to collect Death Stars and solar systems in their pockets.

Almost every looper has the ability to send out a Ping. A Ping is a sort of energy pulse that's only recognizable to loopers, and provides a quick way of announcing that you're Awake. A Ping also contains a general sense of one's location, making it easier for loopers to find each other.

Malicious Looping Entities, or MLEs.

MLEs are Yggdrasil's equivalent of criminals. They're incredibly dangerous, especially to younger loopers, and they pose an active threat to Yggdrasil itself. Examples of MLEs are Kyubey from Puella Magi Madoka Magica, who's responsible for the destruction of that branch of Yggdrasil, the Tick, from the Tick, who keeps trying to fix Yggdrasil (he means well, but he's causing more harm than good), and Waltz from Mega Man, who's basically an evil psychotic killer robot that makes the Terminator look rather cuddly by comparison.

Onwards!

"Alright," Flora said, rubbing her hands together. "It took five loops of study, another loop to actually formulate, and ten loops of practice,

but it's finally ready."

"Flora, I'm still not certain this is a good idea," Techna said. "You're trying to directly oppose the Dragon Fire, the most powerful source of magic in the universe. Isn't that a bit risky?"

"Techna, I am tired of waiting for Bloom to come back and fix this problem loop after loop after loop. This time, I'm doing this my way."

"Alright," Techna said. "In that case, I understand. I'll be here if something goes wrong."

"Thanks Techna," Flora said. "I'll be back. Enchantix!"

The Army of Decay marched on Alfea. Witches, Fairies, and Specialists stood ready, waiting for the assault.

Suddenly a green light appeared in the sky above the castle. "Flora?" Stella asked.

"This must be what she and Techna were talking about!" Musa said. "The two of them said they had an idea to beat the Army! This must be it!"

"But the Army was made with the Dragon Fire!" Stella said. "How's she going to stop it?"

"NATURE'S EMBRACE!" Flora declared. A pulse of green light radiated out from her in every direction, washing over the world with raw magical power.

"What just happened?" Stella asked.

"We've won," Flora said, landing next to her. "I turned the creatures of the Army of Decay into trees."

CRASH!

"The flying ones too?" Musa asked.

"Oops..." Flora said.

"Well, this is awkward," Terry "Tech" said.

"I don't mind," Flora said. "Besides, you look cute as a boy."

"I'm not particularly fond of it," Terry said. "Still, being at Red Fountain does give me the opportunity to conduct a great deal of research on their technology."

"You're the same as ever, Techna," Flora said. "So, would you like to dance with me?"

"Flora, please don't take this the wrong way," Terry said. "But I'd rather dance with Timmy than you right now."

"And if I was Flynn?" Flora asked.

"Then it would be different," Terry said. "But you're not."

"That's alright," Flora said. "I can wait."

"Thank you Flora," Terry said.

"No!" Fand said, banging on her keyboard in frustration. "No, no, no, no!" Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. "You were supposed to end up together! I set it up for you two and everything!"

"Having your plans foiled by your loopers again?" Frigg asked, glancing over Fand's shoulder.

"I don't know why!" Fand wailed. "They weren't getting together again when they were both girls so I figured all I'd have to do is give one of them a male loop and the sparks would start flying again! But look at this! They're still just friends! Why? Whywhywhywhy?"

"Calm down," Frigg said. "Your problem is that you made the wrong one male." She looked closer. "Huh. Oh that's funny."

"What's funny?"

"That you, the worst shipper in the entire tree, the woman who ships everyone with everything, including their own genderbent and non-genderbent selves, seem to have ended up in charge of the first known looper with a hard-coded gender preference. Congratulations on finding such a rare looper."

"But I don't want a rare looper," Fand said. "Why can't all my loopers be normal? My Anchor's normal, why can't this looper be normal too?"

"I think your anchor was like that even before she started looping," Frigg said. "Huh. Maybe your loop's in better shape on that front."

"In better shape?" Fand screeched.

"Yep," Frigg said. "It looks like the gender preferences and related data survived almost perfectly intact. Rather impressive actually, that's usually one of the worst hit places."

"But...but...but..."

"No complaining about your mysterious good luck, Fand," Frigg said. "I need to get back to my loop. Have fun with your little shipping games!"

Fand stared at her screen for a long moment. Then she raised her arms to the sky and wailed. "NOOOOOOOOO!"

2.3.

"Flora, just because we supposedly did it a year after the loop ends doesn't mean we need to do it now," Techna said.

"I know," Flora said. "But it looked like it might be fun, being part of a band."

"Flora, you don't even know how to-" Techna cut herself off, considering. "Actually, do you know how to play an instrument?"

"Of course," Flora said. "It... helps with some of the lonelier loops."

"Flora, you never told me... How often am I Awake?"

"Often enough," Flora said with a smile. "So, I can play all sorts of instruments. Do you think you can play an instrument too?"

"No, but I suppose this would be a good chance to learn," Techna said.

"Great!" Flora said. "Whenever I want to learn a new instrument, I ask Musa to help. I'm sure she'd be thrilled if you asked her to teach you to play."

"I'm sure she will be," Techna said. "I suppose I should try something new. After all, if I'm not expanding my horizons, then what's my purpose in being Awake?"

"Keeping me company," Flora said. "I don't want to go back to looping alone."

Techna didn't have an answer for that one.

"Come on, let's go see about learning some music," Flora said.

2.4

"So, this is your first fused loop?" the scruffy looking man asked.

"Aside from one Hub loop, yes," Techna said. "My name's Techna."

"Doctor Tommy Oliver."

"So these 'morphers' of yours... they run off a combination of mystical energy and technology?" Techna asked.

"More or less," Tommy said. "The technology does a lot of the work, but you need a power source, usually a magical one, to make it work. Why? Are you planning on building your own?"

"Yes."

"Okay then, let me see if I can dig up that manual I have on them."

Techna looked down at her old PDA. She didn't use it much anymore, ever since she'd built her own, far more powerful device. Still, she'd kept it around for nostalgia. "I think it's ready," she said.

"Then fire her up!" Tommy said.

Techna pressed the large, central button on the re-purposed PDA. "Techno Storm, Ranger Form!" She swung her arm up to place the PDA-turned-morpher at the center of her chest. A brilliant flash of light obscured her for a moment. When it faded, she was wearing purple spandex and a helmet.

"Well, I'd say that worked," Tommy said. "Still, why the PDA? It's kind of clunky compared to most morphers."

"Because I knew I'd been holding onto it for a reason," Techna said, her voice muffled by the helmet. "I always planned to use it again for something."

"Fair enough," Tommy said. "So. How about trying out your new ranger gear?"

"Sounds like fun," Techna said.

2.5 (lord Martiya)

"By the way, where are the Trix?" Bloom asked.

That simple question startled Flora and Tecna, and for a good reason: it was a loop where Flora had 'persuaded' the Trix to not try and pursue the Dragon Fire.

In those loops, the Trix, having no reason to attack first Stella and then Bloom, always ended up relatively friendly (if nothing else because they respected Flora's power and wouldn't have the Dragonfire to drive them off the edge), especially when Icy had her sisters present to translate (she just couldn't help but be a bitch, even when trying to be nice). They were helpful, explaining a few tricks, not actively trying to kill Stella when the producers of the Miss Magix contest hired them to test the contestants (seriously, what kind of beauty pageant hired people to attack the contestants on the stage)... And then, without actively trying to cause damage, did something WORSE than summoning the Army of Decay and what they did after joining Darkar.

They always stumbled on Sky's secret early, and the first time, not having any reason to try and get Bloom emotionally weakened, decided to punish him for the two-timing and ended up killing him. Eraklyon invaded soon after.

Then there were the results of their experiments. Being intelligent and resourceful, they always planned for everything they could imagine going wrong... And then something different went wrong, like when they caused a zombie apocalypse trying to cure the common cold (Icy had sneezed at the wrong moment. Icy.), when they destroyed Magix with a nuclear explosion (they were experimenting with telekinetically-confined fusion and Darcy compressed the hydrogen a bit too much), or that particularly bad loop that resulted in them being possessed by the Three Ancient Witches and Darkar, Valtor and the Army of Decay going around (they had summoned the Three Ancient Witches to try and steal their powers, but had bit more than they could chew. Stormy had initially escaped, and before she

too was possessed her attempts at fixing the situation had resulted in the failing of whatever kept Darkar in his castle, Valtor escaping his ice cube and the accidental summoning of the Army of Decay. Somehow. Even Darkar and Valtor had no idea how it happened).

That was why Flora and Tecna rarely defused their threat: finding a way to prevent their latest mess took too many loops, and it was easier to deal with the consequences of them stealing the Dragonfire and going crazy anyway.

In terror, and followed by the rest of the Winx Club and the Specialists, they ran to the shack the Trix used as lab and barged in, hoping they weren't too late...

"Hey girls, want some cereal?"

And found the Trix and a humanoid cartoon rabbit eating cereals in front of a group of bound-and-gagged children.

"What the hell?" Stella asked, expressing what everyone was thinking.

"We were experimenting in summoning, and we got rabbit, cereals and little brats." Icy said.

"And that's enough to torment children?!" Brandon-as-Sky shouted.

"That's not tormenting, that's justice." Bloom explained. "They come from an Earth commercial, in which that poor rabbit always tries to eat some Trix brand cereals, and even when he buys them with his own money the children steal it and say "Silly rabbit, Trix is for Kids"."

Flora and Tecna were speechless. The situation was crazy even for the Trix.

"Good morning, Varanda," Techna said, using the code she and Flora had worked out to let the Anchor know she was Awake. "My name's Techna."

"Techna, it's afternoon," Musa said, walking in. "And does someone want to explain why we're sixteen again?"

Bloom and Stella stared at Musa blankly while Techna and Flora blinked in surprise.

"Musa, it would help if, the next time this happens, you didn't just blurt it out," Techna said.

"What do you mean, the next time this happens?" Musa asked.

"Come on," Flora said, leading Musa off towards the same alcove she'd used to explain the situation to Techna. "I'll explain everything."

"What's going on?" Stella asked. "What did she mean, sixteen again?"

"It's complicated," Techna said. "By the way, Varanda, your real name is Bloom, and everyone in this dorm knows it."

"How?" Bloom asked.

"Time travel," Techna said simply. "Lots and lots of time travel."

"So you and Techna have been doing this for a while now?" Musa asked once Flora finished her explanation.

"Yes," Flora said. "Um, actually, that reminds me, what do you remember?"

"About what?" Musa asked. "A lot of stuff happened in those three years."

"About me and Techna mostly," Flora said.

"You both came to learn music from me, which surprised me," Musa said. "You were really good. Techna was awful with that flute I gave her though."

"Oh good," Flora said. "That's not too far from baseline."

"Is there a story behind this?" Musa asked.

"Uh, when Techna first Awoke, she remembered a loop that was pretty far from baseline," Flora said. "It was... awkward."

"Well, tell!" Musa said.

"So you and Flora are looping through time," Stella said.

"And now Musa is too, apparently," Techna confirmed.

"And we're not going to remember any of this?" Bloom asked.

"No, you're not," Techna said. "I'm sorry."

"How often do you tell us about this?" Stella asked.

"Not very often," Techna said. "It confuses the timeline and that can be bad. Still, since this loop's already off course, I suppose a little more won't hurt. Bloom, you're the crown princess of Domino and the Keeper of the Dragon Fire."

"I'm the what?" Bloom asked.

"She's the what?" Stella asked.

"Hey guys, did you know Techna and Flora are kind of sort of dating?" Musa asked, coming back into the room with Flora trailing behind her.

"They're what?" Bloom and Stella asked in unison.

2.7

Musa Awoke in a stone cell, complete with iron bars replacing one of the wall. Of course, she was dressed up to go to a ball too. "Okay, can someone please explain to me what's happening?" Musa asked.

"Check your loop memories," Techna said from the cell across the hall.

"Oh, right," Musa said. "Uh, I take it you're awake."

"Of course," Techna said.

"What about Flora?" Musa asked.

"She's always awake," Techna said. "That's why she's the Anchor. Anyways, are you done with those loop memories yet?"

"Just a moment," Musa said. "Oh you've got to be kidding me."

"Nope," Flora said, opening the door to her own cell. "We're apparently princesses being held hostage by a terrible dragon. We're supposed to wait for knights to come and rescue the six of us."

"How did you get out?" Musa asked.

"I picked the lock with my hairpin," Flora said.

"When did you learn to do that?" Techna asked.

"My last fused loop," Flora said. "I was replacing someone named Anna in one of the Fire Emblem loops."

"You can get us out?" Musa asked.

"Of course," Flora said, opening Techna's cell. "Bloom, Stella, and Aisha are the next floor up, we're going to have to rescue them too."

"Aren't there supposed to be knights coming to save us?" Musa asked.

"Yes, but I really don't feel like waiting," Flora said, moving over to free Musa.

"Why aren't you just using magic to open the cages?" Musa asked. "Actually, why didn't I do that?"

"Because we're trying to avoid attracting the dragon's attention until the others are out," Flora said. "They're not going to have their powers, and they could get hurt if the dragon decides to attack them."

"Musa, you're going to have to escort the others out," Techna said. "Flora and I will handle the dragon."

"You know, if you two want to go on a date without me, you could just tell me," Musa said.

"Musa, you know we're not dating right now," Techna said.

"No, you're just waiting for Flora to be a guy again so you don't feel weird," Musa said. "Face it, you two are dating."

"Musa, please leave our love lives out of this," Flora said. "Stella's bad enough without you doing it too."

"Alright, alright," Musa said. "Let's go free the others, then you two can have your dragon-slaying date."

"I do not see the point of this game," Techna said.

"You two are my friends," Musa said, "but I feel like I hardly know anything about you. I want to fix that."

"I understand," Flora said. "You only remember us from a few loops, so you're curious about the rest of them."

"Exactly," Musa said. "Anyways, Flora, you're first. Who's the craziest person you've ever met?"

"Hmm..." Flora thought for a moment. "Well, probably someone from the loop where I became a vampire. Alucard was pretty crazy...Anderson might as well have been his twin brother...the cat-boy-girl thing was pretty weird too... Ah, I know, Rip Van Winkle. She was really crazy."

"Who was she and how did you meet her?" Musa asked.

"Oh, she was a Nazi artificial vampire who took over an aircraft carrier out in the middle of the ocean. She turned the crew into ghouls and, um, did all sorts of weird and random things. My bosses wanted the aircraft carrier back, but everything they sent at it got shot down. They sent me in because I could turn the ghouls back into humans."

"How did you get onto the aircraft carrier if they were shooting everything down?" Techna asked.

"I took a plane out over the ship and jumped out," Flora said. "They couldn't shoot us down because we were five miles up. I transformed and miniaturized, then flew down to land on the deck."

"And how did Rip Van Winkle respond?" Techna asked.

"Well I think she was expecting Alucard," Flora "Anyways, she called me a, what was it, oh yes, 'racist, cisgendered, patriarch propagating, misogynistic quisling.'"

"What," Musa said.

"That was my response too," Flora said. "She then told me to 'check my privilege', and shot me."

"She shot you?" Musa asked.

"It wasn't that bad," Flora said. "I'm a True Vampire, Alucard's fledgling. Getting shot by an artificial vampire really isn't all that bad."

"What happened next?" Techna asked.

"Well, I told her that I was a vampire-fairy hybrid from another universe, that I've been a boy many times, that my boss works for a woman who works for a queen, I'm not a quisling, I'm a Linphean, and that I don't really hate anyone, even her," Flora said. "Then I used my fairy dust to turn her and everyone else on the ship back into humans."

"What happened next?" Musa asked.

"We captured her and her Nazi ghouls, then sailed the ship back to Britain."

"And that's it?" Musa asked.

"No, but that's the relevant part," Flora said. "My turn. Techna, what person would you most like to meet?"

2.9

Flora stared at the small boy in front of her. Something about his hat, big nose, and stripped shirt was setting off alarm bells in her head, but she couldn't figure out why.

"Hello," the boy said. "Will you play with me?"

"Um...sure?" Flora said.

Alfea was in flames. A fortunately unAwake Techna sat in a corner, curled into a ball and muttering gibberish. An equally fortunate Musa was in a coma. Stella was dancing with a giant carrot. Bloom had

combusted. Aisha had melted. Flora stared at the idiotic architect of the chaos.

"I like playing with you!" the boy said.

Flora's face twitched painfully into a rictus-grin. "Yes," Flora said. "Let's 'play'."

"And then he melted Omega, broke the Ancestresses, and shattered Linphea into space debris," Flora said. She put her face on the surface of the bar and started sobbing.

"It's alright, Flora," Twilight Sparkle said. "Everyone ends up dealing with an MLE eventually. You just had the bad luck to run into Billy."

"Never again," Flora muttered. "Never again."

"Hello Nanoha," Arisa Bunnings said to the orange-haired girl walking towards her and her friend.

"Hello Arisa," Nanoha Takamachi said. "Hello Musa."

"Hello... Nanoha?" Musa Tsukimura said, confused and hesitant.

"Are you alright, Musa?" Nanoha asked.

"Sorry," Musa said. "My mind wandered off and I feel like I've been thrown for a loop."

"You're looking for a place to anchor?" Nanoha asked.

"Yes," Musa said. "Thank you."

"What are the two of you going on about?" Arisa demanded.

"It's a long story," Nanoha said. "Musa, do you mind if I explain to Arisa what's happening?"

"You do that here?" Musa asked.

"Yep," Nanoha said. "Trying to follow baseline gets me killed in about six months anyways, and the loop lasts for more than ten years."

"My Anchor says changing our baseline's usually more trouble than it's worth."

"Some loops are like that," Nanoha said. "I think you'll like this one though."

"Could someone please tell me what's going on?" Arisa demanded.

"So you have magic of your own?" Nanoha asked.

"Yes," Musa said. "I'm the Fairy of Music."

"I think I have an idea," Nanoha said.

"Nanoha, if it involves explosions, you're not doing it without my supervision," Fate said.

"I promise not to crash the loop," Nanoha said.

"That's what you always say," Fate said. "Right before you crash it anyways."

" *Faaaate* !" Nanoha moaned in dismay.

"What a pity you had to meet us," Icy said, scraping her talons across the ice encasing Bloom. "Sweet little fairy-"

"Leave her alone," Flora said. "Try us on instead."

"Pathetic," Icy said. "Nut! Attack!"

"Stella, get Varanda," Flora said, brushing off the charging ogre with a quick spell. "We'll handle the witches."

"Just like we planned?" Musa asked.

"Of course," Flora said. "Ballistix!"

"Ballistix?" Stella asked, confused.

"Techno Storm, Ranger Form!" Techna shouted, morphing.

"Treble, Bass, set up," Musa commanded the charm bracelets on her wrists.

Flora shifted into her full vampire form and pulled the Harkonnen out of her pocket.

"What the-" Stella demanded in a stunned voice.

The light of the transformations faded to reveal Techna wearing purple spandex and a helmet and holding a very futuristic-looking gun, which she leveled at the Darcy. Musa was wearing a black, sleeveless, skintight jacket with matching shorts, over which she had a reddish-purple vest that went down to mid-thigh. She was holding two pistols and pointing them at Stormy. And Flora was a vampire pointing a thirty millimeter anti-tank rifle at Icy's head.

The looks on the Trix's faces were priceless.

2.12 (lord Martiya)

"Considering the situation and normal male thinking, your actions appear most illogical." Techna said to the boy she had just found under her bed. "Unless your s-"

"Finish that phrase and I throw a tear gas bomb." Riven replied from behind the gas mask that completed his anti-scrying suit.

"Then why are you here instead of out there with Musa and Darcy?"

She had an answer to that-since that loop in which Stella had jokingly suggested the three of them get together, the loops where the Trix weren't hostile and Musa was Awake tended to have the two girls trying to do just that until Icy and Stormy's plans caused a disaster like the Plague of the Werebeds-, but Riven didn't know it. And yet, he always tried to run away whenever the two approached him together.

"Aren't you supposed to have the analytic abilities of a computer?" Riven replied, almost as if it was obvious why he was there.

"I am, but you still make no sense." the fairy replied.

"Well, let me explain. The girls are intelligent, capable, ambitious... And I'm just me! A boy who's good only at fighting and is scared by women! I-I fear they'll realize and-"

"And we'd like you stopped selling yourself short." Musa replied as she dropped her Techna disguise and Darcy made herself visible.

"Before you ask, the suit works but we just wondered where you would hide and, knowing you, we came in Musa and Techna's room." Darcy said. "Besides, you have something you don't even realize is there. You have the darkness of a prince of darkness... And yet you still care. Care of things that aren't useful for some world domination plan, care of people... Why shouldn't we love you?"

Riven was speechless. The girls, his girls, really loved him in spite of his defects. He opened his mouth to reply... And then Stella, encouraged by the Trix attitude about experiments, tried once again to find a new shade of pink, but as she was being helped by Bloom the explosion was much more powerful and devastating.

2.13

"You're late, Sir Flynn," Techna said from her seat atop a very thoroughly concussed dragon's head.

"Sorry," Flora said, pulling off her, currently his, helmet. "I got delayed by the giant killer pidgeons."

"Pidgeons," Techna said, skepticism filling her voice.

"Pidgeons," Flora confirmed. "Pidgeons the size of school buses. When I find the wizard behind all of this I'm going to have a long talk with him about the droppings."

"Well, I suppose we should be leaving, my knight in shining armor," Techna said.

"There's no rush," Flora said. "And haven't you been waiting for a loop like this?"

"True," Techna said.

"Well there's no real reason to stick to the plot then," Flora said.

"You owe me date on a tropical island," Techna said.

"I think that can be arranged," Flora said.

Author's Notes:

2.1: Yes, Flora just told the Dragon Fire no, and made it stick. It makes perfect sense when you realize that if she was still measuring her age in years, she'd be pretty close to using five digits by now. Still a very young looper, but ancient for anyone else.

2.2: Apparently I am now shipping Techna/Flora. Not entirely sure how that happened. As for the admin part of that loop, most loopers adapt pretty quickly to whatever their physical gender is, and have gender preferences that change rather freely. The Winx don't. (Well,

Flora does, but she's pretty calm and flexible about that sort of thing to begin with.)

2.3: Music! Whee!

2.4: Techna is a Power Ranger. And yes, she did base her activation phrase off the one from Ninja Storm. She thought it had a nice ring to it.

2.5: I seriously wish I'd thought of this. The Trix meet the Trix kids. Also, an explanation for why they usually let the loop run its baseline course.

2.6: Some Awakenings are graceful. Some are like this. Hello Musa, welcome to the loops.

2.7: Would you sit around waiting to be rescued if you had powers like that?

2.8: Sort of a continuation of loop 1.6, and one of the common problems of loopers.

2.9: Billy from the Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy. Quite literally criminally stupid. He is in fact so stupid that he's been labeled an MLE because of the damage he does by accident. Also, Twilight Sparkle from MLP, because Equestria is basically considered the therapy loop. If you're having a bad enough loop to get your admin's attention, odds are they'll send you to Equestria to recover.

2.10: Musa's first fused loop: Nanoha, patron saint of friendship through superior firepower. No really, Nanoha makes friends by blasting them with giant pink magical lasers.

2.11: This loop is my entire justification for making Techna a Power Ranger. I regret nothing.

2.12: Befriending the Trix crashes the loop in yet another bizarre way! At least they weren't directly responsible this time...

2.13: I think Fand likes the fairy tale motif.

More loops to come!

Chapter 3

Not much to say at this juncture. On with the loops!

3.1

Flora was used to not being entirely human. She was a fairy who was also a vampire. She'd been a witch before. She'd even been a cyborg in one loop, although fortunately that hadn't stuck. However, she was used to being *humanoid* . Thus her current disorientation. She was some sort of cherub-thing with enormous ears, two short arms, a crown of flowers, and a stalk-like thing instead of legs. Oh, and she was holding a flower larger than she was. Flower included, she was maybe four inches tall.

"Can someone tell me what I am?" Flora asked.

"Huh," the blue turtle in front of her said. "You appear to be a Flabébé. I'm Squirtle, Anchor for the Mystery Dungeon: Rescue Team branch of the Pokemon loops."

"Flora, Anchor for the Winx Club loops."

"Oh yeah, you're that new loop I've heard about," the turtle said. "Fairies, right?"

"Yes," Flora said. "I'm the Fairy of Nature."

"Cool," Squirtle said.

"I wonder if my powers still work like this," Flora said. "Do you mind if I try transforming?"

"Sure, go ahead."

"Enchantix!" Flora announced. A flash of light filled the building she and Squirtle were occupying. When it faded, Flora was very different. To start with, she was much bigger, more than ten times her previous tiny size. Instead of her tiny crown of flowers, she had an enormous collar made of flowers. A pair of green antennae sprouted from her forehead and her stalk-leg had extended. Two leaves grew upwards from the bottom of the stalk, looking sort of like her usual wings, while two much smaller leaves grew downwards, superficially resembling feet.

"That's... not what usually happens," Flora said.

"You've evolved," Squirtle said. "Twice, actually, making you a Florges. That's probably how the loop interpreted your powers."

"Loops do that?"

"All the time," Squirtle said with a chuckle. "All the time. So, how do you feel about rescuing some Pokemon?"

"If we're helping people, I'm all for it," Flora said.

"That's the spirit!"

3.2 (lord Martiya)

Musa was walking through Magix City, trying to remember WHY she had the impression that day was important. Then she saw the group of witches in a bar, and, after taking a look inside out of curiosity, she remembered: in the original timeline and the loops where the Trix were hostile, like that one, that was the day she found out about the relationship between Riven and Darcy.

And as usual they were inside talking at a table... And Icy showed up to tell her to give up, as Riven found her insignificant. But this time she didn't hit the witch, causing the creation of a lynching mob. No, this time she would get an explanation for that comment. That

phrase and Riven's refusal to help while the witches chased her were the most important reasons why, without Darcy to balance them, her relationship with Riven was so rocky. So instead she shoved Icy away, entered, and demanded an explanation.

"What? I never said anything like that." Riven replied, looking puzzled.

Darcy, on the other hand, had removed her glasses and was pinching her nose in apparent frustration.

"Who told you that? Icy? Stormy?" she asked.

"Uh... Icy." Musa replied.

"Look, Riven never told you anything like that, and earlier I overheard my sisters planning to help me keeping you away from MY boyfriend. I told them not to, that Riven and I could do it on our own... But I guess they decided to do it anyway. Icy probably wanted to cause a situation in which we could give you a lesson, maybe even provoke me into giving it myself, and make sure you would hate him."

"Like... Setting up a lynching mob and appearing to me disguised as Riven just to refuse to help?"

"Sounds like one of her plans."

"Darcy, your sister is quite the-" Riven started, only for the witch to shut him with a finger on his mouth.

"She's not, she just tends to resort to violence more often than she should. Pixie, just for this once I guarantee you nobody will do anything if you hit her."

"Wait a minute, you-"

Icy's complaint was interrupted by Musa's right hook, that knocked her down.

"Now that it's settled, let's make things clear." Darcy continued. "What usually happens between us is just business, but if you touch my boyfriend or attack my sisters without cause it becomes personal and I'll fry your brain. Understood?"

Musa was about to agree when the rest of the Winx, together with the Specialists, barged in as a rescue party, with Stella nearly hitting Icy with a stray spell.

"Now you did it!" Darcy cried out as she telekinetically threw a table at her, starting anyway the fight in which the Trix found out where the Dragonfire was, and, as this time it wasn't in the open but a bar that got demolished. As most of the witnesses were witches and the owner worked mostly with the Cloudtower students, Stella got stuck with the bill.

At least Musa now knew that Riven had never insulted her like that... And got away without Darcy trying to fry her brain. That spell was always PAINFUL...

3.3

"Sisters!" Icy declared. "It's time to summon the Army of Decay! Let us form the circle!" The three witches sat, their interlinked hands forming a circle as the Dragon Fire flowed through them.

"Now, let us summon the Army!" Icy shouted. The magic blasted into the sky. Clouds formed over the land and a dark rain began to fall.

"It's working!" Stormy said.

"Of course it is!" Darcy said.

"Soon we'll rule the entire Magical Dimension!" Icy said.

"And done," Flora said, the glow of her magic fading.

"I know this was my idea," Musa said. "But I kind of feel guilty about this. I mean, they worked so hard to get this power and summon their army, and now..."

"Hush," Flora said. "I want to know if we'll be able to hear them from Alfea."

"Darcy, what is this?" Icy demanded. "Where's our army?"

"It should be here!" Darcy said, going over to look out the window. "It should have formed by now!"

"Hey Icy, what's that?" Stormy said, pointing to a conspicuously colorful patch.

"Let's find out," Icy said, her voice promising death to whoever had crossed her. She took to the air and flew towards the oddly colored patch. "What. Is. This."

"It looks like... cereal," Darcy said.

"Cereal," Icy said, false calm suffusing her voice. "Cereal. The spell that's supposed to summon the Army of Decay summons cereal."

"I... I guess so," Darcy said, shaking her head.

"RRRRRAAAAAUUUUGGGGGGHHHHHHH!"

"Yep, audible from Alfea," Flora said.

"The Army of Trix," Musa said. "I'm gonna have to remember that one."

3.4 (lord Martiya)

"This is your fault." Flora said.

"It can't be my fault! They aren't looping!" Musa replied.

"It's still your fault."

"Loops? That explains so many things..." Icy commented, barely surprised by the discovery. After what had just happened, not much surprised her anymore. "Why exactly would be Musa's fault, anyway?"

"Last loop you summoned the Army of Decay-"

"What?! Why should we do something so stupid?!"

"The Dragonfire had driven you crazy. As I was saying, last loop you summoned the Army of Decay and Musa had the idea to turn it into Trix cereal."

"Amazing coincidence. But this is actually Bloom's fault: it was her who joked about us and the Trix cereal..."

Then Cloudtower, corrupted by the mutant Trix cereal, got to the milk and reached full power while spawning new rabid Trix rabbits made of cereal.

3.5

"How often do loops like this happen?" Marcus asked.

"Every now and again," Flynn said. "It takes some getting used to, but there are benefits to it."

"Like Tech being willing to dance with you?" Marcus asked.

"Like that," Flynn said.

Terry threaded his way through the crowd back to the other loopers. "Blake and Princess Skyla have hooked up as usual," Terry informed them. "Prince Steve and Brenda too."

"I guess some things stay the same," Marcus said. "Hey, where's- oh. Oh my. Is that-?"

"Raina," Flora said. "She's pretty, but not my type."

"Yeah," Marcus said. "Uh, why don't you and Tech go have fun together? I'm going to enjoy the heck out of this loop."

3.6

"So," Techna said, fidgeting slightly in her dress. "Another baseline loop."

"They are the most common," Flora said. "Do you want my help finding Timmy again?"

"...No," Techna said. "Meeting him again and again like this... It's gotten rather depressing."

"Maybe you can find someone else to dance with then," Flora said.

"Maybe," Techna said, fidgeting some more.

"I'm sure Stella would help if I asked," Flora said. "I can go find her if you'd like."

"No!" Techna said quickly. "No, I..." She fidgeted some more. "Flora... Would you... like to dance with me?"

Flora blinked. "Of course I would, but I thought you weren't comfortable with dating a girl."

"I'm not," Techna said. "But I like dating you, and... Flora I'm sorry. I haven't been fair to you. You've put up with me putting our relationship on hold so many times just because I felt awkward."

"I don't mind," Flora said. "I'm just happy to have you around."

"I know you are," Techna said. "That's just who you are. But it's not fair, and you shouldn't have to put up with it."

"Techna, if you're uncomfortable..."

"I'll work through it," Techna said. "It's not what I always imagined, but I want to try to make it work. I can't promise it'll be perfect, but I want to do it. Can we give it a try?"

"Of course," Flora said, a gentle smile on her lips. "And I would love to dance with you."

3.7 (lord Martiya)

The loop had been going well. The Trix were enemies so there was no danger of a sudden end of the world, a few changes she had done around should ensure less drama when Sky's real identity would be revealed in a few days, by opposing them Mirta had just earned the respect and protection of the Trix and should fit in at Cloudtower (after a small roughing up for keeping up appearances, of course) if she decided not to transfer...

Then Sky had showed up with something he had just found around: a candid picture of Flora. Nothing vulgar or anything, just her (faking) studying with a cute face... But someone had taken the picture without her noticing, and was SELLINGthem. That had to be stomped out before they got to her in other places, and she knew EXACTLY who would do something like that.

That was why she teleported at Cloudtower, inside the Trix' room, interrupting their little speech to Mirta and Lucy (who had attacked the Trix to defend her friend and got the same treatment).

"What the-how did you enter?!" Icy exclaimed.

"Teleportation. Now explain, and it's better be good." Flora replied, showing the Trix the picture.

Then something unexpected happened: the Trix became furious enough to leak some of their power. It could happen when witches became too enraged, but the Trix had such a control it only happened on purpose, when they let it leak a little to scare their opponents. Yet this time the air was cooling and becoming electrified and objects were trembling in spite of them.

"Someone decided to ignore The Ban." Icy said, her voice literally dripping venom. "Mirta, we're not disclosing your change of social status yet, I want you to find who dared this first."

Mirta, terrified, nodded and left with Lucy, all too happy to get away from witches she now knew could take her with ease AND who were incredibly furious, even if not with her.

"Wait, it wasn't you?" Flora asked, genuinely surprised.

"Flora, look at us, and especially at me." Darcy replied with the tone you use to explain things to a small child. She had completely calmed down. "Do you really think people haven't done the same to us, and not just with innocent pictures, too many times for us to even tolerate the idea?"

"Last time someone dared we gave him a lesson we thought would be unforgettable." Stormy added, slowly stopping the leak. "Guess we'll have to get disgusting."

"And disgusting we'll get." Icy said, her own leak stopped. "Pixie, you better go away before Griffin finds out. And tell your friends we're having a truce 'till this matter is settled."

3.8 (lord Martiya)

Of all the loops Flora had suffered so far, this one was the strangest.

She was a dog. She was a robot dog. She was a RESCUE robot dog, activated by a hand-powered crank. She had been built by Sky,

who played superhero with Bloom while they both wore jumpsuits, masks and hats.

Their enemies were the Trix, who were wearing clothes they wouldn't wear even if it killed them. Icy was wearing a black sleeveless leotard, a bat-like mask with a "I" on the forehead, opera gloves and long high-heeled boots, and had a skull-shaped pipe. Darcy had a purple jumpsuit two measures too large, another bat-like mask with the first letter of her name, and a fake pig nose. Stormy had a green suit identical to Darcy's and a fake long nose. And Sky and Bloom had just kicked their asses, taking a piece of Dragonfire from them and driving them back at their mecha, that looked like a goofier Darkar.

Wait, why was she hearing Stormy's depressed rant and Icy praising her? Had a trapdoor just produced a palm tree on which Knut was climbing while wearing a pig costume?

"Even pigs can climb trees when praised!" Knut shouted before producing a valve-like noise with THE NOSE OF HIS COSTUME and returning in the trap door with the tree.

Then the robotic Darkar shot her with a fireball, nearly knocking her out. Wait, how can a robot get knocked out?

"Yatter-Flora! Here, the Mecanomoto!" Sky shouted as he threw her an electronic bone.

Flora ate it reflexively, and felt POWERFUL! Invincible!

"Take this! This week's surprise robot!" she cried out before lowering a ladder from her mouth and releasing mini-robots from it. Mini-robots that looked like a horde of Zings, who proceeded to disassemble the Trix' mecha and blow it up.

Seriously, what the hell was happening?!

3.9

"So you two finally got over Techna feeling weird?" Musa asked, observing the couple holding hands.

"Not entirely," Techna said. "I'm still working on it."

Flora smiled at her girlfriend.

"Well it's about time," Musa said. "I was starting to think about finding a way to lock you in a room together for a loop to sort it all out."

"Musa, while I appreciate the enthusiasm, I would very much rather you didn't do that," Techna said.

"I think we'll be fine," Flora added. "Techna's being very sweet." Techna blushed.

"That's wonderful," Musa said. "I'm happy for the two of you. Now I just need to find something to do with the Flora-and-Techna-proof cage in my Pocket."

3.10

Flora looked around with satisfaction. It was ironic that despite having all the time in the world, she'd lost track of some of her old hobbies, but this loop... As far as Flora knew she was the only looper in this loop. If there was a major conflict, she wasn't aware of it. Her only responsibility for this loop was running a college greenhouse and teaching the occasional student. It was remarkably relaxing.

"Professor Flora?" a voice came from the greenhouse entrance.

"Yes, Cassie?" Flora asked, turning to face her intern.

"I have the new seedlings," Cassie said. "Where would you like them?"

"Over in the corner, thank you," Flora said.

"Would you like me to help plant them?" Cassie asked.

"No thank you," Flora said. "I'll be fine."

"You're always fine," Cassie said. "People always told me I have a green thumb, but you make me feel like an amateur. It's almost like magic."

Flora smiled. "Almost. Don't you have a chemistry class soon?"

"Oh crap, it's Tuesday!" Cassie said. "Thanks for reminding me!"

"Not at all," Flora said. "Good luck."

"Thanks!" Cassie said, hurrying out the door.

"Like magic," Flora muttered, moving over to the seedlings Cassie had delivered. "Magic makes it too easy." She grabbed her favorite trowel from its place on the wall. "Let's get you beauties planted."

Flora set to work, whistling an old Linphean tune as she did.

3.11 (lord Martiya)

This loop's gala had gone as it usually went when Flora was the only one Awake, with a difference: the egg she had given to the Trix had become a duck-billed DINOSAUR.

Flora was giggling about it when she felt a pull, and found herself in Griffin's office at Cloudtower.

"Welcome, Flora." the witch said, strangely amiably.

"But-how-why?" Flora stammered to hide her real abilities while she tried to figure how she had been summoned.

"An advanced summoning spell, and because you gave the Trix that dinosaur."

"But-I didn't-"

"WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?! I am Griffin, headmistress of Cloudtower, a school where cunning and misdirection are a necessity and a way of life! I could write the book on it, and in fact I did and made it a required textbook! Do not even think to make a fool out of me."

Flora shut up.

"Good. Now, I wished to tell you why exactly what you did was incredibly stupid.

"You see, we witches are powered by negative energy and feelings. That's the only difference between us and you. Because of that, and with the relatively recent rampage of the Three Ancient Witches, we face discrimination, a discrimination that the board of governors of Alfea is only too happy to support in spite of Faragonda's wise advice and the utter stupidity of actions such as snubbing us for your formal dance, or trying to block us out of the Day of the Rose celebration. After all, if some people are prone to violence by themselves why should you give them a good reason?

"Now, a large part of my job is to keep my students' resentment under wraps and allow them to vent in a safe way. For example, I approved the Trix' plan to ruin your gala because it was not just disgusting, despicable, vile and wretched, but it did not involve maiming, killing or large-scale destruction. Just a scare and an enormous pest control bill. As unbelievable it may be, they have remarkable self control for witches with so much power, so little experience and their reckless hormone-filled age."

It WAS kinda unbelievable at first... But then, considering that power tended to make witches meaner if they didn't have the experience to control it, it made sense.

"Still, even they have a limit. For most things they'll pursue a vendetta with their own means, but stopping short of maiming and murder unless they have a good reason. But if someone breaks their ban on selling candid pictures without the subject's permission, attacks one of their sisters without cause or damages or steals one of the mementos from the relatives they like, such as those crystals of theirs, they go all out. They cash in all favours owed to them, kill without discrimination, and call for help from all their friends and allies. And when they do that, they prove they truly are the blood descendants and heirs of the Three Ancestral Witches."

Well, that explained why destroying the Vacuums always resulted in the Trix trying to murder her. Flora didn't even know that Darcy could summon hellfire until she did it the first time...

"Now go. Face their revenge, try to survive, and next time be wary of what you do when retaliating." Griffin said as she sent Flora back to Alfea.

Just in time to capture the new janitor before he could shoot Stella with a Thompson, of all things. Who did use Tommy Guns on Magix?!

"Tell me why you were trying to kill Stella if you want to live." she ordered to the janitor, bound by her plants.

"Sure. Boss told me to say it." the janitor replied. "Blondie did something to piss off some childhood friends of his son, they want revenge, and here I am."

"What?" was the collective reply of the Winx. Aside for Tecna.

"Wait a minute... The Trix set the mob on Stella for a prank?! One that Flora did?!" she shouted.

"I told you what I knew." the janitor, no, the mob hitman, replied. "Can I go now? We apparently got the wrong target, and the boss needs to know."

Flora let the hitman go, and Tecna told them what was happening: turned out that, in this loop at least, the Trix were childhood playmates of a Darko the Black, only son of a mob boss, and that he was the closest thing Icy had to a boyfriend. Not an actual one because it was still Icy, but still a very close friend nonetheless. And whatever Flora had broken with that dinosaur was something the Trix liked enough to set the mob on them.

3.12

"So, how do you want to play this one?" Musa asked the other two members of her coven.

"What do you mean, Musa?" Flora asked. "We're the witches."

"Well obviously," Musa said. "But what are we going to *do* ?"

"We could try taking over the Magic Dimension," Techna suggested. "I've occasionally wondered what the Trix found appealing about that."

"I've never tried it, but I suppose it could be interesting," Flora said cautiously.

"Of course that leaves us with the problem of deciding how to take over the Magic Dimension," Musa said. "We could just steal Bloom's powers, or we could steal the Codex, her powers, Darkar's powers, and then that weird Ultimate Power, or we could just go around collecting the magic of all the realms."

"Bloom would just get her powers back," Techna said. "She always does. If we wanted to take over with pure magical power, we could probably do that without taking anyone else's."

"Huh, you've got a point there," Musa said. "That's probably too easy though."

"Probably," Flora said. "I vote we take over Shadowhaunt instead. I'd like to see what we can do with that place."

"And the Anchor has spoken," Musa said. "Shadowhaunt it is."

"I'm not the only one who gets a vote here," Flora said.

"No, but we both know Techna's not going to argue with you about this, and I like the idea of kicking Darkar out of his house too," Musa said. "I guess the question is where do we put him?"

"We can't destroy him without destroying Bloom," Techna said. "Their powers are linked."

"I've got it!" Musa said. "I should still have... Aha!" She pulled out a cage large enough for a large animal to live in fairly comfortably. "The Flora-and-Techna-proof cage. It might need some work to hold Darkar, but I think this will do."

Flora and Techna were clearly not amused.

3.13 (lord Martiya)

"My dear Bloom, how are you?" Valtor saluted after a random encounter with the Winx.

He was there, smug as always even if Bloom had just achieved Enchantix (the Trix, behind him, weren't so smug). His smile just invited punches... So, given the distance, Flora did just that, knocking him on his ass. She hadn't even used any augmentation...

"You-you barbarian!" he cried out, tears in his eyes for the pain. "How you dar-"

Valtor's rant was interrupted by Darcy snapping his neck.

"We've just found out he's pathetic and we have to wash ourselves from the humiliation of swooning after him." Icy explained, matter-of-

factly.

As the Trix left with the body to claim the bounty and a pardon, Stella said what everyone was thinking: "If I knew it was so easy I'd have done it a long time ago."

3.14 (lord Martiya)

Valtor had just invaded Cloudtower again. Business as usual... Except that Flora was there alongside her fellow Winx loopers, and they had been discussing with Griffin just how to deal with Valtor...

"Worth a shot." Griffin said about the strategy. "Valtor! Come and fight me alone, if you dare!"

"As you wish, my dear." Valtor replied. "But I still suggest you surrender: none of your tricks will work on me, and you know it."

The Trix moved away from Valtor, ready to enjoy the show. Griffin closed distance with a teleportation, Valtor casually generated a magical barrier... And found himself cut open by the shortsword that Cloudtower's headmistress had used on him.

"Three years between our break-up and your defeat, plus a few months with three witches capable of killing an ogre bare-handed, and you still haven't learned how to fight close and personal? How disappointing." Griffin said before pushing her opponent down and leaving him to bleed to death on the floor.

"Ugh... Trix! Help me!" he cried out.

"Headmistress, we'll take our diplomas and things and then we'll be on our way. Away from this idiot." Icy stated coolly.

"Of course. Glad to see you showing again some sense." Griffin replied.

"Wait a minute... They had been expelled!" Tecna pointed out.

"And two weeks later they barged in and took over the school after overwhelming every single teacher and me. This is an academy for witches, little fairy, not your little school for softies."

3.15

Flora smiled over her dinner at her girlfriend. This had been a fun loop, and Flora was sorry that it was going to end so soon. Being able to take her girlfriend out for a fancy dinner without waiting for the right loop was very nice. The fact that they could buy the restaurant out of pocket change this loop was entertaining too, now that Flora thought about it.

"Is there something on my face?" Techna asked, noticing Flora's smile.

"No," Flora said. "Just thinking about how lucky I am to have you around."

Techna blushed. "Well, thank you," she said. "I like being with you too."

"I had a lot of fun this loop," Flora said. "I like Musa, but some time alone is nice too."

"She's going to be unhappy that we did this without her," Techna said. "Still, dropping out of Alfea to start our own company proved remarkably successful."

"I'm just impressed at how you managed to defuse every major conflict without even a hint of violence," Flora said. "And the Trix make surprisingly good managers."

"It keeps them too busy to get into trouble," Techna said with a smile.

"Still, you're the one who got them working for us," Flora said. "I don't think I'd have ever thought of it."

"Optimal utilization of resources," Techna said, quoting one of her favorite parts of the company mission statement. "When properly directed, the Trix are a valuable resource."

"I suppose that's one way to look at it," Flora said with another smile. "Are you finished with your dinner?"

"Yes," Techna said. "I think we're ready to head home."

"Then let's go," Flora said.

"Last night of the loop," Flora said sadly, standing outside the door to her bedroom.

"I know," Techna said from her room across the hall.

"Well, I'll see you when I see you again," Flora said.

Techna came out of her room and hugged Flora. "See you when I Wake." She pulled back and gently kissed Flora, then pulled away and went to her room, leaving a slightly stunned but very happy Flora behind her.

In the Admin Lunchroom. (Evilhumour)

"Leave me *alone* Fand." Fenrir grumbled as the fairy floated around his him as he tried to eat his mewling plate of kittens for his lunch. "I've already *got* a girlfriend!"

"But you two would be so cute together!'

"Amaterasu is an *ex* of mine," Fenrir growled out. "I was a bit of an ass when we were dating and luckily we needed things as pleasant as possible when we broke up. Again, I've *got* a girlfriend already!"

"But what about you and Bast?"

"...Are you *drunk?!* " Fenrir coughed out a kitten. "She hates my guts! And I hate hers!" Blinking, Fenrir turned to face her. "And I'm already *seeing* someone!"

"But don't you see it? Two conflicting personalities, hitting against each other until they realize the love that's hidden there-hey put me down!" With a toss, Fenrir threw the fairy Admin into the fridge and then pulled it down onto the floor, locking her inside. Struggling for a period to free herself, Fand called out a simple question to the fuming wolf. "Is that a no?"

Author's Notes:

3.1: Flora the Florges. This was inevitable.

3.2: Stella: The reason we can't have nice things. Like world peace.

3.3: I blame the person who misread a comment on the forum and mixed up the Army of Decay with an army of Trix cereal, an idea which I promptly stole. No further comment.

3.4: I said no further comment. At least this wasn't mine. One Trix joke is enough for me.

3.5: Musa, ever the adventurous one, discovers the wonders of rule sixty three. (I know I said the Winx loopers don't do this, but Musa's... Musa. Bloom and Stella certainly don't do it.)

3.6: The setup I had was really starting to bug me. Techna too apparently. So this happened. I can live with that.

3.7: Even the Trix have standards.

3.8: I'm told this is a reference to something called Yatterman. I didn't ask any more, because I really don't want to know.

3.9: You're joking, right Musa? Right?

3.10: Flora's vacation loop.

3.11: Apparently in the comic's continuity the Trix have mob connections. Well okay then.

3.12: You're not joking. Okay then.

3.13: Valtor sucks at melee.

3.14: Valtor still sucks at melee.

3.15: That's the first time Techna's kissed a female Flora since her awakening loop. Go Techna!

Admin Lunchroom: Our Admin, ladies and gentlemen.

Alright, that's it for this round. No new loopers, which is a shame, but I've got two more authors (not lord Martiya) who have promised me loops, one of which is an activation loop. So, lots to look forward to. Onwards!

Chapter 4

A bit more Loop terminology.

Ascension. This is when a person, presumably a looper, gains access to power sufficient to make them equal to an Admin. In simplest terms, the person becomes a god. This is a BAD THING. Why? Prominent side effects include the complete and utter destruction of the individuals home universe. The only known Ascension was Madoka from Puella Magi Madoka Magica. Fortunately Madoka was able to save a backup copy of her universe inside her bow (don't ask), but attempts to restore her home branch of Yggdrasil have yet to meet with success.

4.1

"There is something distinctly wrong with this picture," Musa said, staring out at the crops Flora and Techna were cultivating.

"Perhaps," Flora said mischievously. "But it's funny."

"How did the two of you even come up with this idea?" Musa asked.

"We got into an argument over an Earth expression," Techna said. "'They don't grow on trees.'"

"So we argued back and forth for a while," Flora said. "Then we suddenly realized, maybe certain things don't grow on trees normally-"

"Got it," Musa said, holding up a hand. "The two of you had a lovers' spat that gave you a weird idea. That's all I needed to know."

The air was suddenly filled with a bizarre mish-mash of random ringtones.

"I do believe your crop of cellphones is ready to be harvested," Musa said drily.

4.2 (lord Martiya)

"Why are you doing all this?!" Flora asked, exasperated at the Trix still working for Valtor in spite of all the humiliations they collected in the process.

"Why don't you ask Bloom?" Icy replied. "She knows what she did to us."

"I SPARED YOUR WORTHLESS LIVES WHILE YOU WERE CRAZY DUE YOUR OWN STUPIDITY, THAT'S WHAT I DID!" Bloom replied, finally snapping. "IN THE LAST THREE YEARS MY CHILDHOOD TORMENTOR MANAGED TO GET MY BOYFRIEND OF TWO YEARS TO BREAK UP WITH ME WITH ENORMOUS PEER PRESSURE, AS SOON AS I DISCOVER THAT MAGIC AND FAIRIES EXIST THREE WITCHES START ATTACKING MY FRIENDS AND THEN ME FOR NO APPARENT REASON, EVEN TRYING TO GET ONE LYNCHED, TWO SCAMMERS TRY AND BURN MY MOM'S SHOP BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T FALL FOR THEIR TRICKS, I FIND OUT THAT MY PARENTS DIDN'T THINK IMPORTANT TO TELL ME THEY ADOPTED ME 'TILL I WAS ABOUT TO FIND OUT ON MY OWN, THE BOY I WAS CRUSHING ON TURNS OUT HAVING LIED TO ME ABOUT HIS IDENTITY AND BE ENGAGED TO THE THIRD MOST ARROGANT PERSON I'VE EVER MET, THE WITCHES FROM BEFORE BARGE IN MY OWN, HIT ME WITH PAINFUL SPELLS, TAKE HOSTAGE MY STEP PARENTS AND TELL ME THE DEPRESSING FATE OF MY BIRTH FAMILY BEFORE STEALING MY POWERS AND USING THEM IN A FAILED ATTEMPT AT TAKING OVER THE WORLD, AFTER I GET MY POWERS BACK AND MY CRUSH AS A BOYFRIEND A CRAZY ARMORED SKELETON TRIES TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD, CULMINATING IN ME GETTING BRAINWASHED TWICE WITH A RAPE VIBE, THEN MY BEST FRIEND GETS HER FATHER BRAINWASHED, I DISCOVER I'VE A SORT OF BROTHER BUT IS

ALSO THE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY FRIEND'S PREDICAMENT, THE MOST ARROGANT PERSON I'VE EVER MET AND A CREEP WHO'S INTO TEENAGER EVEN IF HE'S OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY FATHER, AND MY BOYFRIEND'S EX BRAINWASH HIM INTO SETTING TORCHES AND PITCHFORKS ON ME, ALL I DID TO VENT WAS TO TURN MY CHILDHOOD TORMENTOR'S BIKE IN A PIG UNDER HER, STARTED CALLING MY ADOPTED PARENTS BY NAME AND SET A DRAGON FURY ON THE CREEP, AND NOW YOU DARE TO BLAME ME FOR YOUR OWN STUPIDITY?!"

And she shouted all that in one breath.

"I take you don't know what you did to us." Darcy replied without missing a beat.

"And, like, what did I do to you?" Bloom asked, her psychotic smirk making the Valley Girl slang she just used sound creepy instead of stupid.

"In Earth terms, Lightrock is the realm of Barney the Dinosaur."

"I-I didn't know! I'm sorry! If I knew I would have killed you on the spot instead of letting you be subjected to that!"

"Is this Barney that bad?" the Awake Tecna whispered to Flora.

"Pretty much." Flora admitted.

"Now that they put it that way, their hate makes sense." the Awake Musa admitted.

4.3 (kingofsouls, Firehawk242)

Flora Awoke perched on a rooftop, and immediately felt like she was choking. The air was dirty and grimy, riddled with smog to the point that if one looked up they could see actually see it.

What startled Flora more was the assault rifle in her hands, the weapon suddenly feeling very...heavy. Flora put the weapon down,

Why must she always seem to wind up in situations involving guns was possibly the greatest mystery of all. Sighing, Flora reached into her Subspace Pocket and got out a handheld mirror to see what she looked like this time.

Psychically Flora looked the same, aside from her hair being purple. The most startling aspect was her right eye was covered with an eyepatch.

Flora just groaned.

"Rough night Expat?"

Flora turned to face the speaker: A young woman dressed as a ninja with a purple cape approached Flora, bandages covering her legs, arms, and mouth. In one hand was a drink carrier with several cups of refreshment in one and a bag bearing the logo of a nearby coffee shop. "You could say that.." Flora replied.

"Something tells me it's not the night that's bothering you." The young woman handed her the back, Flora opening it find a few donuts of various kinds. She reached in and took a donut topped with sprinkles. "As if you need someone like an Anchor?"

"You're Looping?"

"And so are you. Not often does anyone loop in as a replacement for someone here." The woman held an empty hand to Flora, the friendly questure a welcome sight. "I'm the Wraith, Maia Montgomery."

"I'm Flora." She took the hand and shook the Wraith's hand. At that moment Flora's Loop Memories kicked in. Her name was Flora Cohen, an expert gunner and vigilante who lived in Rook City. The most alarming part was her mother: Dawn Cohen, better known as

Citizen Dawn, was her superpowered mother, and openly hated her for not powers, leading to Flora defecting and being a hero.

Probably a good thing considering Citizen Dawn was labeled 'superpowered criminal/terrorist'. "So, what are we going right now?"

"Staking out a major villain. Graham Pike, the Chairman. Runs Rook City from the shadows, and trust me, he's a major pain to take out as he pretty much owns Rook City." Wraith explained. "One of my contacts heard a rumor that the Operative is going to meet with a new gang in the region, and it's most likely going to end badly."

"So if we find this Operative…"

"One step closer to finding where Pike is this Loop." Wraith concluded. "Sorry about not explaining, we're on a tight schedule and we're at the do or die point."

"It's okay." Flora smiled, understanding where the Wraith was coming from. "I'm a little new to Looping but I can handle it."

WIth that, Flora willed a flower into existence near an empty flower pot. "Plant magic? Interesting."

"I was also a vampire." Flora smiled. That was a strange, and sometimes demeaning loop but she had a hard time arguing with the fringe benefits being Seras had provided.

Wraith was on the cautious side however. "Please tell me it wasn't a Twilight vampire…"

"Hellsing."

"Ooh, that's a good one." smiled the Wraith. "Hopefully we can get wha…"

Suddenly there was a loud crash, the sound of person smashing into a trash can that then caused the both of them to tumble into more

crash cans. To complete the symphony a stray cat cried at the end of the smashing and crashing. "I'm good!"

Out of the shadows rushed an obvious criminal as another shadowy figure ran in another direction, the villains able to get a significant head start from the heroes and thus evading capture. Wraith groaned, her teeth gritted in anger as she leaned over the roof's edge and shouted to the voice down bellow. "Damnit Setback, this is supposed to be a stealth mission!" She shouted. Sighing, she faced Flora, who was a little confused. "Well, that plan's scrubbed. Looks like we'll need to do the stakeout another day since Setback scared them off…"

"Hey, it's not as if they're going anywhere outside of Rook City." Setback shouted from below. Fora looked over the edge of the building and saw a brown haired man in a black and yellow spandex costume climbing up a nearby latter. He was pretty muscular but not completely muscle bound. His mask was a simple bandana with eyeholes. "We can find where Pike's hiding this loop later!" At this he noticed the newcomer. "Who's that and why's her hair the same shade as Expat's?"

"I'm Flora." she called down. As soon as Setback reached the roof and got off the ladder she offered him her hand. He eagerly took it and shook it, flashing her a smile. "Guess I'm Expat this loop."

"It is a pleasure to meet you." Flora couldn't help smile back as well. This Setback was optimistic and from what she could tell was one of those nice guys that always have your back.

"Well, what are we waiting around for?" Before Flora or Wraith could protest, Setback grabbed the two and brought them close to him, Wraith trying to wriggle out of the grip while Flora just went with it. "We have a guest, and that means we should give her the basic outline like good hosts should! And pizza. I know this great pizza joint, really good pepperoni pizza. Trust me on this one. It is to die for!"

Flora gently lifted Setback's arm with what little of her was free, the grip loosening once Setback got the drift. "Is he always so…?"

"Chipper?" sighed the Wraith. "Unfortunately yes."

"Hey, it's a blessing, not a curse. Now this way! Pizza awaits!"

Later

"Welcome to Casa de Expat!" Setback announced as he turned on the lights to...Casa de Expat.

Flora had mixed feelings when the lights were turned on.

Guns.

Guns everywhere.

They lined several of the walls, each one in their own place on the wall eagerly awaiting their owner to take them within her grip and wield their mighty power. The variety was astounding, consisting of assault rifles, machine guns, shotguns, pistols, and oddly an RPG launcher. Boxes of ammo lined the floor, some stray bullets littering the ground.

The kind of ammo seemed to be a little abnormal as Flora reached down into inspect one of the boxes. "...Incendiary ammo? Liquid Nitrogen rounds? Shock rounds? Wow, lots to choose from"

Setback tossed her a box of nitrogen and shock rounds. "Yea, you should honestly see the average gun bill that Expat has over the course of an average loop."

"Because she likes to shoot guns?"

"That, and the shock rounds and I have an...intimate relationship."

Flora was a little confused at that statement. "How so?"

Wraith couldn't help but grin as she set down the pizza boxes and took a glass from the kitchen to prepare herself a drink. "They tend to hit Setback when Expatriette uses them."

"They stopped stinging after the first hundred dozen times."

"Uh….that's...nice." Flora wasn't exactly sure how she should have felt about how non-chalant Setback said that.

Flopping onto the couch, Setback shrugged. "Hey, don't be worried about me. Trust me, weird stuff happens to me all the time."

"Well when your superpower is having super luck mixed with mood swings, it's expected."

"Thanks Wraith."

Flora sat down, eager to let the situation decompress and to take a load off. "Considering how this is my first time here..."

"You need a minute? No problem." Setback flopped onto the couch next to Flora,stretching out his arms and almost beaning her in the head by accident. "It was a slow crime fighting night anyways."

"Setback, that was all you."

"All I'm saying is that tonight isn't going to be as crazy as any day from this point on."

Flora didn't know how to approach Setback. Thankfully she didn't have to as Wraith emerged from the kitchen, two cocktails in hand. Flora took one from Wraith as the hero sat down in a nearby chair. "Is he always so...um...optimistic?"

"Yea, but after a while it just...blends together with everything else he does."

"Moving on, since this is your first time here Flora, some background information can go a long way. " Setback grinned. He reached into

his pocket, pulling out a box. Flora took one look at it, raising an eyebrow.

"A game?"

"It's us from the Hub!" Setback dug into the box, prepping the game as Flora watched.

"What he means to say that our backup in the Hub is a card game, not a tv show like yours is." Wraith explained.

"Dibs on playing as Ra!"

Three games of Sentinels of the Multiverse and two pizzas later.

Setback sweat bullets, a slice of pepperoni pizza dangling out of his mouth as he gripped the top card of the deck in fear of what the card was.

He groaned in anger. "Oh come on...Insanity!? We just killed all the manifestations! Now we gotta do it again?"

"Maybe it won't be that bad?" Flora suggested. She received a glare of anger from Setback as he played the top card - a Crushing Cage - followed by another - a Twisted miscreation - leading into Crazed Artriface. Which in turn brought forth a Lambent Reaper and Recalescent Hellion.

"I blame you Wraith." Setback flipped his character cards over, signalling his defeat.

"In my defense when I played against Infinitor last he didn't swarm us like the Zerg..." Wraith flipped over her character card in defeat as Flora did the same.

"Tell him that when it's time for us to hang with Captain Cosmic."

In the meantime Flora reached for the box of cards and leafed through it, each deck separated and organized by type. "So, each of these decks of cards is real here?"

"You bet." Without looking Setback reached into Flora's box and pulled out a deck, practically shoving it into her face. "This one's yours!"

"...it says it's Expatriette's deck…"

"Yea, but you're replacing her, so it's kinda yours?"

Flora had to admit the optimism was refreshing.

"Moving on, do you have any plans this loop Flora?" Wraith asked their guest.

"Not that I had in mind. I could use a vacation though...why do you ask?"

"Just making sure. We've got a lot of supervillains, both terrestrial and extraterrestrial. Like Infinitor." Flora picked up Infinitor's card in question: The character in a black skingtime suit, glowing with bright neon green light with a nucleus of the same energy surrounding one hand. Metal plating sat on his shoulders with a belt of the same color and presumably material. A green star with lines coming out of the diagonals resembling an X embalmed on his chest. To finish the costume a metal mask hid his face, a green glow shining from behind the mask's eyeholes. "Don't worry about him though, he's not due to arrive for a few years."

With that, Flora let loose a sigh of relief. If Infinator's power in the game was equal to that in real life, she had plenty of time to get used to the Loop before he came around. "Please tell me he's not going to swarm us with those creepy manifestation things?"

"I'm afraid so Flora."

With that, Setback reached for another slice. "So I'm guessing we're doing a standard Baseline loop with villain pranking Wraith?"

"I've got a prank lined up for Captain Cosmic and for Naturalist. I got a few Ping responses but had a hard time telling who was who."

Stretching, Setback got up and reached for the telephone. "I'm on it." He then slinked off into one of the other rooms, his fingers dancing across the keypad.

Flora couldn't help but notice how...relaxed the two were. "Maia?"

"Yes Flora?"

"You're pretty relaxed about Looping, are you?"

"It took me a while if that's what you're saying." she laughed as she sat next to her Loop's guest, taking off the bandages that covered her mouth. "At first, I was convinced that Chrono-Ranger and La Captain broke the timeline. Then we had a large meeting with most of the active heroes in our Loop and that's when we learned of Yggdrasil and the Loops."

"Who?"

"Chrono is a time traveling cowboy and La Captain is a time traveling pirate! Totally normal!" came the voice of Setback from the other room.

"A time traveling cowboy? This loop sounds..."

"Out there? After a while you get used to it." Wraith smiled. "So, how about you?"

"Mostly Looped into worlds that put a gun in my hands. Right now, I'm okay with just relaxing and possibly taking a tour of your Loop."

"Hope you enjoy space travel then. We have a few important places off planet. But I'm guessing that's not why you seem drained."

Flora blinked, amazed at the accurate guess. "You're good."

"Simple body language."

"It's just…..this Citizen Dawn person…" Flora then dug through the deck box, and pulled out the deck that was Citizen Dawn's. The character card portrayed the super supremacist in all her "glory": A tall blond in a sleeveless red tunic-like top with a palm full of light standing before two kneeling men that were cowed by her power. "I don't like her."

"You and rest of the planet…"

"What I mean is...why would she act as if she's better than us because she has superpowers?" It was hard for Flora to understand what would drive anyone to reach that point. "Having powers doesn't make you a better person."

"Sound like you have a plan."

"I do. I want to teach Dawn a lesson."

One Week Later

The outskirts of Megaopolis.

Flora stood alone, the wind blowing her hair around as she waited for her to arrive. Thanks to the gift of foresight (in the form of having Setback give her a heads up as to when Dawn and her Citizens were set to arrive). The morning sun was at her back, a fitting backdrop for the coming battle.

Standing a few steps behind her were Setback and Wraith, alongside the Immortal Haka and America's Greatest Legacy, both heroes unAwake this Loop. It took a while to convince the two powerhouses to go through with the plan, Legacy calling it

"incredibly idiotic" and Haka musing about something in the Maori tongue, but in the end they agreed.

Off in the distance, she saw her foes.

The Citizens of the Sun.

They marched, Citizen Dawn leading them as two of the Citizens held the banners of their cult on high.

Flora was then jolted from her thoughts by Setback's touch. "You ready for this?" Setback asked the fairy girl. "Not too late to change the plan."

"No thanks Pete. I can do this."

"Hey, in case things go south don't be afraid to call for help. I got my Buster Sword in my pocket and Wraith has her whatever and whatever Mirrodin swords."

Shaking her head, Flora put her hand on Setbacks' shoulder, and replied with a smile. "I'll be fine, I'm not as fragile as I look. But thanks for being here for me. "

"Hey, what are friends for?"

At long last, the small army of Citizens reached the small legion of heroes in the middle. "Well, if it isn't my daughter, the powerless traitor that I had the displeasure of spawning. I didn't expect to see you here at Megaopolis. I thought you would be busy trying to clean the streets of Rook City.

"Get out of my way, lest you suffer my wrath."

Flora was calm, the Citizen's imposing presence really not doing it for Flora. "Dawn, you don't want to do this."

"You think I'm going to listen to you?" Dawn spat. The Citizens behind her started to laugh as Flora shook her head. "I raised you,

hoping you could have a small fraction of my greatness, but you are simply just another person without any power whatsoever. But you still fight in the name of justice for the powerless scum that don't really care if you fight for them or not. It's rather sad isn't it, my Citizens?" The Citizens collectively agreed with their leader as Flora shook her head.

"Justice is doing what's right. It doesn't matter who you're doing it for."

"And that is where you are wrong. True justice lies with those whom have power, power beyond what mere humans have. And I have power. The Power of the sun itself. And what about you? You have no powers, you and your justice have no meaning, no purpose other than to serve the ones who do. No purpose other than to serve us."

"Then what about me, Haka, and Setback?" shouted Legacy through gritted teeth. He was starting to get pissed off, Dawn's dogma leaving a bad taste in his mouth every time he heard that drivel. "We're into exactly normal."

"It's simple. You have lost your way. You stand against the power of the sun itself," Dawn's palms glowed, the light of the sun in the palm of her hands. "and now you will learn the error of your ways, Legacy."

"Mom, they're not here to fight you."

"Then why are they here?"

"They're here to watch me fight you."

Dawn paused for a moment, then laughed alongside her Citizens. "YOU!? You dare to fight me? Your own mother?"

"Yes," Flora said. Then she smiled. "In fact, I'll fight you without even using my powers."

"...what powers? You don't have any..." Before Dawn could finish her gloating, Flora raced toward the fiend, faster than any human could ever move, stunning Dawn and her followers into silence. '...impossible. You're normal. You have no…"

"Powers?" Flora grinned, coming to a stop just a few feet short of Dawn. "Speed isn't the only thing I have."

The land around the two then became very vibrant, as flowers begun to spring into existence, blooming alongside the saplings sprouting from the earth. The wonders of nature grew and grew as if someone hit fast forward on reality.

To finish the show, Legacy and Haka each slammed their fists into the ground, and pulled a chunk of the earth out of the ground. The rock - about half as wide as they were tall, was then thrown at Flora, the girl walking back to her allies.

Her irises then became a blood red, and she struck the rock. The force of the blow was audible, and the strike devastating: the rock was rended into rubble with a single strike

The Citizens all took a step back, fearful of what they saw. Flora the Expatriette, the normal daughter of their glorious leader, now was exhibiting powers similar, no *greater* than many of their own. And making it look like it was simple child's play.

Dawn simply glared at her daughter and her show of force. "What is the meaning of this? How is it that you now have powers now when your entire life was spent without them?"

"The meaning? Well, how I got my powers isn't important." Dawn grit her teeth as Flora avoided the question and moved on. "What is important is that my powers make me stronger than you, so much stronger that if I used them against you now without holding back, there would be nothing left of you. And against a monster like you, it would be so easy to cut loose, and show you exactly what I can do. And no one would blame me for doing it either.

"But I'm not going to do that. It's not who I am. That wouldn't prove anything to you except that the one with the bigger stick is the better woman. But if I beat you using simple tools that anyone can use, simple training that anyone can be taught, then maybe, just maybe you can get it through that thick skull of yours that you're worth doesn't depend on if you have powers or not: It's how you use what you have, be it a legacy of powers, immortality, tools, luck, or simply never giving up or giving in.

"I'm going to fight you Dawn, but it will be on my terms, with my skills, my way. And if you think I'm wrong…" the sound of cocking pistols echoed in the silence, bullets entering the chambers of Flora's twin pistols as he aimed the twin guns at her 'mother'. "Come over here and prove it."

"Goading me, are you, you insignificant little gnat!?" Dawn anger brought form a corona, engulfing the villain in the radiant light of the sun. "I am your mother, your superior, and you dare to lecture me? ME? I am Citizen Dawn, the CItizens of the Sun's all-powerful leader, and you are but a mere obstacle in my path that must be annihilated! You preach of how powers do not make a person, but it is because you do not understand what it means to be superior to the 'normal' ones! WELL I WILL TEACH YOU TO UNDERSTAND, AND I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT IT IS TO FEAR THE POWER OF THE SUN!

"CITIZENS OF THE SUN, ATTACK MEGAOPLIS AND STRIKE DOWN ANY WHO GET IN YOUR WAY! LEAVE MY DAUGHTER TO ME!"

With that declaration, war was waged between the dawn and the hero, a torrent of light shooting out of Dawn's palms as Flora unloaded her pistols and let her bullets fly. As the two began their clash, the Citizens of the Sun let loose their own battle cry, and charged the other heroes, eager to defeat them in the name of their leader.

"Guess that's our cue!" Setback shouted exuberantly as he reached into his pocket, and out of his pocket emerged the giant Buster

Sword as Wraith revealed her Sword of War and Peace and Sword of Light and Shadow. "The Looping Dark Watch, attack!"

Wraith just groaned as she parried a blow from Citizen Assault. "We never agreed to that name Setback!"

"Hey Flora?"

Flora turned to face Setback, the two sitting on the rooftop of the Freedom Tower, their temporary home due to an alien - one Setback referred to as Deadline - destroying Rook City in an attempt to save the Earth from...something.

Talk about extreme.

"Oh, hello Setback."

"Just a heads up, we're gonna face a big threat soon" He sat down next to Flora, gazing up at the stars with her. "In about a week this metal blob thing we call Progeny is going to come up from the crust of the earth and trust me, that fight is a rough one one he pays Megaopolis a visit."

"So...that's why we're here?"

"I was going to say that the view is an amazing one, but that's a better reason!" Setback laughed. "Honestly though, I do have something for you. One for wrath..." He gently threw something to Flora, the fairy clumsy catching it and almost dropping in in surprise. She barely had enough time to notice Setback throwing another gift. "And one for ruin."

Flora took a look at the gifts once she was sure she had a good grip on them. It was a pair of pistols, each one with a white dove on them, going up the length of the weapon's magazines. "Uh...thank you."

"No problem." Setback grinned. "I thought you might want a souvenir from your time here, since they're technically yours. That, and you're pretty good with guns."

"Uh, thanks?" Flora looked at the twin pistols, looking at them and unsure how to feel. "I had a good teacher, but, um…"

"Uh...did I do something I shouldn't have done again?"

"No, it's just...it took me a while to get used to guns."

"How so?"

"A lot of my loops featured me using guns. It was...interesting to say the least." explained the fairy. She chuckled recalling a memory. "I wonder how my unAwake friends would act if they saw me with a gun."

"Hopefully one worth recording. Oh hey, that reminds me," Setback revealed yet another goodie pulled from Subspace: A SD card. "I recorded that speech you gave Dawn and made you a copy."

"Thanks."

"You know if you don't want the guns, you can keep them here and leave it. I'm just saying it would be a good idea to take them along as a souvenir. It's what I do."

A raised eyebrow matched Flora's expression. "I'm being serious. It's something of a hobby of mine." Several pairs of the handguns appeared, Setback smiling wider than Flora had ever seen him smile the entire Loop. He held up each pair, almost shoving them into Flora's face as he excitedly explained."This pair was when me and Expat teamed up together to stop Plague Rat from eating some of the citizens of Rook City. This pair was when Baron Blade tried to drop the planet Mars on the Earth instead of the Moon. This pair is one of my favorites: It was when me and Expat were Thor'rathian Freedom Fighters rebelling against Voss' rule of our 'homeworld'."

The guns in question were definitely alien, looking more like laser pistols than regular pistols. A new set appeared as Setback explained that pair with a dour frown. "And these...well these were from the fime Expat broke up with me after I told her about the Loops. She...needed therapy that time."

"The important part is that I kinda wanted you to have something to remember the loop by. Good times, bad times, they're all worth remembering."

4.4, Adminspace

"Madoka!" Fand wailed as she rushed about, her hair in a mess and her wings trailing behind her. "Madoka!"

Madoka looked up from her current project. Running loops was hard enough without distractions, thank you very much. "Fand, if you're here to try and convince me that I belong with Dionysus again, the answer is no, and I will ask Fenrir to stuff you in the fridge again."

"No, it's not that!" Fand said. "Not this time! I found something in my loop! Something bad!"

"Alright, calm down," Madoka said. "Why come to me about it?"

"I thought you might be able to help," Fand said. "It's... I'm worried that someone might Ascend, like you did."

"Oh," Madoka said. "Right. Let me take a look at it and we'll see what we can do to fix this."

"Thank you Madoka!" Fand said.

"Good call," Madoka said as she looked at the data on this "Relix" and the power contained within. "That's an Ascension just waiting to happen."

"So what do we do?" Fand asked. "I'm not good at this sort of thing!"

"Calm down Fand," Madoka said. "I have an idea that should fix it, but I'm going to want to run it past Hephaestus to make sure it'll work before we install it. Can you keep things under control for a little longer?"

"Yes, of course," Fand said. "Thank you! Thank you so much!"

"I'm just doing my job," Madoka said. "I won't let another branch of Yggdrasil die."

"Alright," Hephaestus said. "Is everything ready?"

"Potential danger removed," Madoka said from her screen, tapping a few keys. "Structure repaired to prevent paradox."

"Guest Anchor is ready," Fand said, looking distastefully at the image of the Tick on her screen. "I really wish we didn't have to use him."

"He was the only one who volunteered," Madoka said. "And you said it yourself, your Anchor is far too good at preventing this from happening for us to run a proper test."

"It's a good thing your Anchor is so good at preventing this," Hephaestus rumbled. "If she wasn't we might very well have had another Ascension before we even noticed there was a problem."

"Yeah, I know," Fand said. "I owe her a vacation loop or two."

"And a break from your attempts to ship her?" Madoka asked.

"That actually worked out already," Fand said. "And they did it on their own too. I think I'll give them a vacation loop together."

"Ladies," Hephaestus said. "Focus. I've got the kill-switch set up if things got wrong. Fand, start the loop."

"At last, the Ultimate Power is mine!" Darkar announced. The light drifted over to his hands. "And now, to remake the universe in- eh?" A thick book appeared in his hands. "Not what I was expecting. Perhaps if I read it?" He opened the book.

"Hey Fand, I didn't take a look at the data you supplied to fill the hole left by the Ultimate Power," Madoka said. "What did you put in there?"

"Nothing bad," Fand said.

"What...is this?" Darkar demanded. "What... What is this 'shipping'? DarkarXValtor? Who is Valtor? What is-" He cut off as his eyes tracked across the relevant pages. "It...it...IT BURNS!"

"Oh come on," Fand said. "My writing's not that bad."

Hephaestus and Madoka shared a nervous look and then slowly eased away from the fey Admin.

4.5

"Well this is... disconcerting," Techna said as she watched a very familiar pink haired fairy enter Alfea.

"Tell me about it," Musa said. "I'm not sure the shorter pigtails worked for me."

"What I don't understand is how there can be two of each of us," Techna said. "I mean, there's us, the loopers, and then us, the unawake fairies."

"It's called a mini-me loop," Flora said. "They happen from time to time."

"Have you had one before?" Musa asked.

"Yes," Flora said. "It's kind of embarrassing seeing everything I did wrong back in baseline."

"You?" Musa asked. "Miss Goody Two-shoes herself?"

"Hey, I make mistakes too," Flora said defensively.

"So except for us, this is a baseline loop?" Techna asked.

"It should be," Flora said. "What do you want to do?"

"I'd like to see more of baseline," Techna said. "Just seeing the show in the hub didn't really give me all the details."

"How do you plan to do that?" Musa asked.

"Enchantix!" Techna said, transforming. She took the bottle of fairy dust from the necklace and sprinkled it over herself. She rapidly shrank down to less than three inches tall.

"They'll see you eventually," Musa said.

"Not with my optic camouflage," Techna said, rummaging around in her pocket. "I developed it a few loops back for- ah, here it is." She pulled out a device almost as large as she was. The problem quickly became apparent.

"You might want to be holding it *before* you miniaturize," Musa said.

"Does everything revolve around Bloom?" Musa asked.

"Pretty much," Flora said. "The Trix want her power, Darkar wants to use her to obtain the Ultimate Power, and Valtor's basically a corrupted version of her. If the show from the hub's accurate though, it stops being entirely about her the year after the loop ends."

"It does?" Musa asked.

"Yep," Flora said. "Instead it's all about Roxy."

"Who's Roxy?"

"The last native fairy of Earth, the princess of the Earth Fairies, and the Fairy of Animals."

"Techna, you have the best Enchantix story," Musa said. "You really do."

"They're all good stories," Techna said.

"But yours is better," Musa said. She raised her hand and started ticking off fingers. "Aisha gives up her only chance at restoring her sight to save her mermaid aunt. Good. Stella takes a hit from a monster to protect her father. Also good. I rush into a library that's burning with dark magical fire even Bloom can't put out to rescue a princess. Cool, although there's no family connection for me. Flora dives into a river to save her little sister, which was touching. Bloom manages to will herself into an incomplete version of her Enchantix, eventually earning the full version when she freed Domino and her parents, which is easily the second best, but you, you couldn't be satisfied with saving a person, or even a realm, could you? No, you had to jump into an unstable portal to seal it from the inside, thereby saving the entirety of the Magical Dimension." Musa shook her head. "Face it, you have the best Enchantix story."

"She does have a point," Flora said. "Not even Bloom's done what you did."

"I just did what had to be done," Techna said. "People's lives were in danger. I could save them, so I did."

"Of course you did," Flora said. "You're a fairy, that's what we do."

"So, do you guys want to watch the graduation ceremony or not?" Musa asked. "Because it's starting in a few minutes."

"We're coming," Techna said.

4.6 (lord Martiya)

"WHAT?!"

"You heard it right: as children we wanted to be fairies." Icy repeated.

It had been a relatively calm "Friendly Trix" loop... And now, due Brandon not keeping his damn mouth shut, the Winx, the Specialists and most of the patrons of that witch bar lied on the floor, so shocked and surprised they fell from their chairs and nearly got a collective heart attack. In fact, a couple witches DID have a heart attack.

"But... Aren't you actual descendants of the Ancestral Witches?" Stella asked.

"Statistically speaking it's likely everyone in the Magical Dimension can trace their ancestry back to at least one of them." Stormy pointed out. "We're just members of the clan that actually bothers to claim it and has a tendency to produce sets of female triplets."

"Can imagine how your family took it..." Tecna said.

"No, you can't, and be glad of it." Darcy replied from where she had just saved one of the witches who had a heart attack. "We got separated for years, enough we don't actually know how our sisters looked between the ages of eight and thirteen, and they made sure we couldn't POSSIBLY become fairies by having too much wrath inside us to use positive magic. The only reason I'm so well-adjusted compared to my sisters is that I have the power of Darkness, and I couldn't become a fairy anyway..."

"And got a kick to learn how to heal and summon fire through it." Icy commented.

"Right, now we know what to do in one of the next loops." Musa said out loud.

"Loops? You mean you've been looping through time?" Stormy asked.

"And the both of you have been stupid enough to say it out loud in presence of our cousins, the ones reckless enough to try and cut you open to see what makes you do it." Icy said.

Flora said nothing, she just opened fire with a machine gun.

4.7 (Evilhumour)

Techna raised an eyebrow at latest gun her girlfriend got. It looked like a complete mess of parts thrown together with an oversized barrel. Flora just sighed and placed her head down on the table next to the gun.

"Iz got the baddest gun so far in my lazt loop and Iz still talking like this." Flora groaned, banging her head against the table.

4.8 (ScyBlade)

"Heard you were looking to get some guns from my Loop."

Flora turns around and notices a certain white-haired red long coat loving devil hunter.

"Oh yes. I heard that your guns, Ebony and Ivory, were modified by their creator to have infinite ammo." Flora responded.

Dante winced. "That's not right. See my devil powers provide the bullets." Dante rubs his chin. "I might be able to teach you how to do

that with your powers."

"Fairy or vampire?"

"Which kind, 'cause if it's Twilight-"

"Hellsing."

"Both!"

Author's Notes:

4.1: Apparently they do grow on trees.

4.2: Lightrock: A Fate Worse Than Death.

4.3: Flora's extremely powerful and doesn't like bullies. Guess how that turned out?

4.4: Fand means well. She doesn't always do well, but she certainly means well, and sometimes that's all it takes.

4.5: Mini-me loops. Most loopers really hate those things.

4.6: The Trix as fairies? I guess anything's possible. No wait, they have an eternity to live through. It's not possible, it's mandatory.

4.7: Winx meets Warhammer 40,000. I'm not sure whether this is more or less strange than the remarkably common MLP meets Warhammer 40,000 loops.

4.8: Flora makes strange friends. First a commando, then a superhero, and now a half-demon. The loops are a strange place.

Chapter 5

5.1

Musa looked at her fellow loopers. "I'd like to try Befriending the Trix this loop."

"Musa, you know how that works out," Techna said. "I'm not ready to deal with them unleashing a plague of locusts or frogs or giant spiders again."

"No, not befriend them," Musa said. "I want to Befriend them."

"What's the difference?" Flora asked.

Musa held up her twin charm bracelets and smiled.

"Where did she get those things?" Icy demanded.

"Who cares, just run!" Stormy shouted.

"Come back!" Musa said. "I haven't finished making friends with you yet!"

"Sonic," Treble said in a high pitched voice.

"Buster," Bass rumbled.

A purple beam fired out of each gun, blasting the Trix with sonic magical energy.

Nanoha would have been proud.

5.2 (NIGHTcapD)

Flora walked over to the anthropomorphic cat who was acting janitor for the Winx Academy this Loop. "And who might you be?"

Without batting an eye, he responded, "That depends. You Loopy?" as he sucked dust, scraps, and other assorted garbage from the lunchroom into a weird vacuum.

"Not really. I'm feeling more Anchored right now."

"Ah. So am I, at least in my home Loop." He stopped sweeping, and held out a hand. "Name's Blinx."

Her hand stopped halfway to his. "Blinx? As in, rhymes with Winx?"

"Unawake me found it hilarious as well when I was assigned here. Awake me still thinks it rather silly. You gonna shake or what?"

"Sorry." They shook. "What do you mean though, 'assigned'?"

"The factory-the time factory-found that due to the magic of this world, time monsters and time-altered monsters were more naturally occurring than on any other world, though technically this loop only renders this one." Blinx shrugged. "Backstory."

"Backstory."

"Either way, I was assigned here so that I could deal with them whenever they came up. So as to fit in, I applied for janitorial duty here and was hired for the low, low cost of standard hospitality. I'm not complaining, though-I've handled this job often in the Loops."

"What's with the vacuum?"

Blinx smiled. "The best part of my job. Sweeping up garbage gives me ammunition for the Sweeper-that's what this is called-which makes beating monsters a bit easier." Seeing her eyes jump slightly at the word "ammunition", Blinx stated "If you want to try one out for yourself, there are spares in most broom closets. Now, if you'll

excuse me-" as his Sweeper suddenly became a beeper "-I've got confirmation of monsters."

"Good luck."

5.3

Flora watched the whole song and dance of Bloom's identity being revealed once again. She was the only one awake this loop and she hadn't done a proper baseline loop in a while, so she'd decided to just let the loop run its course. It was nice to revisit the classic timeline every now and again. And the whole thing was coming to an end as usual. The rest of the Winx headed towards the dorm and Flora made to follow them.

"Flora," Faragonda's voice brought Flora to sudden halt. "Would you come with me please?"

Flora blinked in confusion. This wasn't part of the script. "What is it Miss Faragonda?" Flora asked.

"There's someone in my office who asked to speak with you," Faragonda said.

Flora blinked again. Another looper maybe? She hadn't felt any Pings... Suddenly she realized she'd been standing there for almost a whole minute. "Sorry, Miss Faragonda," Flora said. "I'll speak with them."

Miss Faragonda lead Flora into her office where a woman with some of the most ornate fairy wings Flora had ever seen stood staring out the window. She turned and smiled. "Ah, Flora, there you are."

"Should I know you?" Flora asked. Behind her, Miss Faragonda slipped back outside to give the two some privacy.

"No," the woman said. "My name is Fand, the Queen of the Fairies. I'm your admin."

"Oh," Flora said. "Uh, hi."

"Relax, I'm not going to hurt you," Fand said. "By the way, congratulations on finally working things out with Techna, but did you have to do it during my lunch? I wanted to see it!"

"Uh..."

"Don't worry about it," Fand said. "I'm on your side. You two make a cute couple!"

"Um, thanks?" Flora said. "But... why are you here?"

"Oh right, the reason I came," Fand said. "Two reasons. You know what Ascension is, right?"

"Of course," Flora said. "Commander Shepard explained it to me. That's what happened to someone called Madoka, right?"

"Exactly," Fand said. "Anyways, that Ultimate Power in Relix was an Ascension risk, so I got Madoka and Hephaestus to help me deal with it. It's gone now."

"Gone?" Flora asked.

"Yep. You don't have to worry about Darkar getting his hands on it ever again," Fand said. "Um, just... don't try to take it for yourself."

"Why?" Flora asked. "What did you do?"

"Well I had to put something there to replace it," Fand said. "Some of the material I used is a bit... personal."

"I don't think I want to know," Flora said. "So that's the first reason?"

"Yep. Just wanted to tell you that we fixed that particular problem."

"What's the second reason?"

"I owe you a favor," Fand said. "It took me way too long to notice how dangerous the Ultimate Power was, and you managed to make sure it never fell into anyone's hands until I did. That was almost ten thousand loops, and you never failed, not even once."

"A favor?" Flora asked.

"A favor," Fand said. "I'm offering you the chance to request a specific loop. You get to tell me roughly what you want, who you want awake, and maybe a little of how you want the loop to play out, and I'll see if I can make it happen for you."

"Do I need to decide now?" Flora asked.

"No, no," Fand said. "You don't even have to decide this loop. But try to come up with something fairly soon, okay?"

"I will," Flora said. "Oh, and thank you."

"No," Fand said. "Thank you Flora. I don't want to lose my branch of Yggdrasil."

5.4 (lord Martiya)

Flora was in Cloudtower. It was a loop with 'friendly' Trix and human versions of the Ponies (something that had played in the loop being friendly, thanks to Applejack's cider making her scare the Trix. At least the witches had not met Pinkie Pie yet, as she was busy on other worlds), and a couple days earlier Bloom had mentioned time travel before them. Since then, the Trix had disappeared. And knowing the Trix she didn't want them to mess with space-time. Especially not with the loops.

That was why she was in Cloudtower, first explaining the headmistress and her teaching assistant (none other than Twilight

Sparkle) what had happened and now observing them through one of Griffin's spells as they debated how to restrain some individual.

"We could kidnap her sister and use her as hostage to force her compliance..." Icy said. "Nah, that's beneath us."

"Are you well?" Darcy asked.

"Of course I am, why?"

"Because you consider kidnapping a child beneath you?" Stormy replied. "It's beneath US, but-"

"She couldn't even fight Knut's sneezes, and I'm not taking hostage someone that weak."

"Well, that leaves us only one option: asking nicely." Darcy declared.

"Right, let's go."

The Trix rose and started walking, and found themselves in the office.

"Good morning, headmistress." they chorused, not missing a beat.

"Good morning girls. I think you wanted to talk with Flora." she replied.

"Wait a-YOU WANTED TO KIDNAP MY SISTER?!" Flora shouted, rightly enraged by that.

"Not at all, that's beneath even Icy." Stormy answered.

"We just didn't know how to convince you to supervise our experiments." Darcy continued. "Pretty much every one in the list but the Dragonfire Theft has a chance to cause a disaster, and, differently from our cousins, we'd like to avoid it."

Flora slapped her forehead at the Trix' latest antic. Still, she should have seen it coming they would try and resort to blackmail for that... Just one question.

"But why me?" she asked.

"Because you're a time traveler." Icy replied.

"Don't try to lie, it's the only logical explanation for everything." Darcy added. "The headmistress probably already knew."

"I did, and Faragonda would too had she not gone soft and got distracted by Bloom and her Dragonfire." Griffin confirmed.

"And don't fear, we won't try and dissect you to check if it's something inside you to allow for time travel." Stormy continued. "We thought about it, but rejected it as too dangerous even before realizing we have no idea on how to restrain you long enough."

"Pity, I was so curious..." Griffin said.

Flora moved away from her.

"I too have no idea on how to restrain you long enough, girl."

"Plus, she's joking. I think." Darcy stated.

"Alright, I'm supervising your experiments." Flora said.

The Trix hugged her, surprising the fairy.

The months had passed, and the Trix had not caused any disaster (and Flora had the distinct impression it hadn't actually been them in the other loops. Something to investigate). In fact they had graduated with honours, their crowning achievement being the conversion of Shadowhunt in a place of healing (and surviving).

Now they were at their graduation party, and the Trix had decided to something great (and safe) for entertainment.

"Today we'll finally summon the greatest party entertainer of all time and space with her staff! A summoning that failed for years, but this time it WILL work!" Icy announced. "Behold!"

It worked even too well: it was Pinkie Pie in her form as Chaos Goddess of Celebration with all her daemons.

At least it HAD been entertaining...

5.5

"You're Flora right?"

Flora glanced up from the book she was reading. A blonde woman in a yellow uniform was standing there. "Yes, I'm Flora. Who are you?"

"Seras Victoria," the woman said. "I hear you're my new sister."

"Sister?" Flora asked, confused.

"You're a fledgling of Alucard, which makes you my sister," Seras said. "I hear you went through my loop as me."

"Yes, but I was told it was the Abridged variant," Flora said.

"Oh," Seras said. "Oh my, that's a rough one."

"It had its moments," Flora said.

"I suppose it would," Seras said. "Do you want to go get a drink? The first round's on me. Or do you not drink?"

"I started after I ran into Billy," Flora said with a shudder.

"Ouch," Seras said. "Tell you what, the first *two* rounds are on me. Let's go."

"So, you're a full vampire?" Seras asked, putting her empty glass down on the bar. "You've drunk blood?"

"Yes," Flora said. "It was in the same loop I turned into a vampire."

"Who was it?" Seras asked. "Pip?"

"Who's Pip?" Flora asked. "No, it was one of the Hellsing soldiers. He died in the battle in London. I couldn't heal him. I needed the power to fight back, so..."

"You mean they didn't all die when the estate was attacked by the Valentine brothers?" Seras asked.

"No," Flora said. "Well, sort of. It's complicated."

"I'll take your word for it," Seras said. "Have you ever turned anyone else into a vampire?"

"Um, I tried once," Flora said. "It didn't exactly work as planned."

"Oh really?" Seras asked. "Well, do tell."

"Okay, there's this guy, Prince Sky, he's Bloom's boyfriend. He dies in the second year of the loop, but Bloom brings him back. Somehow. I never really understood how that one worked, and neither does she," Flora said. "So one loop, he's dying and Bloom wasn't there because of changes I'd made to the loop."

"So you try to turn him into a vampire to save him?" Seras asked.

"Yes," Flora said. "Looking back, I probably should have used fairy dust to heal him, but I didn't really have much time."

"So what went wrong?" Seras asked.

"Well," Flora said. "There was this really awkward moment when he came back as a ghoul instead of a vampire."

"Oh," Seras said. "Did you... explain this to Bloom?"

"No, and I never want to," Flora said. "Once he was a ghoul I used my fairy dust to turn him back into a human. And that was the end of it."

"You mean you didn't tell anyone about this?"

"You're the first," Flora said. "I don't really like talking about it."

"I can see why," Seras said. "Well, it was nice talking with you. I think you'll make a great little sister."

Flora smiled slightly and emptied her glass.

5.6

Flora Awoke in the room she and Bloom shared a few minutes before "Princess Varanda" arrived, as usual. She sent out a quick Ping, but didn't get any responses. She gave a soft sigh. It was going to be another lonely loop. Still, she had an idea or two she wanted to try. Not having anyone else Awake would make those plans a little easier to pull off.

She looked at the clutter. Had she really been this disorganized in baseline? The room was a mess! She smiled at the thought. Techna's logic had been rubbing off on her. She summoned her magic and used a few simple spells to clean and organize the room. The last flower pot settled into place just as the door opened.

"Hi there," Flora said. "I guess you're my roommate?"

"Yeah, my name's Bloom," Bloom said, looking nervous as usual.

"Ah-hem," Stella coughed.

Bloom paused for a moment, an odd expression on her face. "Sorry, uh, I meant Princess Varanda of Callisto. Bloom's my nickname."

Flora was a bit puzzled. Bloom's expression... she seemed almost torn, like she didn't want to say anything. And she seemed a bit more confident than usual. It was possible that this was just a quirk of the loop. Minor changes like that happened all the time.

"Nice to meet you, Varanda," Flora said.

"Callisto?" Techna's voice came from outside the dorm. "Fourth world of Magic Realm's upper ring? Wow! That's quite a ways away. Hi, my name's Techna."

Flora watched as her friends introduced themselves to each other yet again. There was something off about Bloom's behavior though that was bothering her. She couldn't quite place what it was that felt wrong, but it did.

And then the inevitable happened. Flora had tried numerous times to find a way to prevent this. She really had. But for whatever reason, every time the loop started, Kiko and her talking plant got into a fight. Every time.

The rabbit screamed.

"Plant, let him go," Flora said.

"It's okay Flora," Bloom said. "I think Kiko tried to eat it. It was just defending itself."

"I know," Flora said. "But that doesn't mean it-" She paused. "How did you know my name?" Flora said. "I don't think I ever introduced myself."

"Huh?" Bloom said, her eyes widening in alarm. "Ah, I, uh, well, that is, it's, uh, it's on the door?"

Flora looked at Bloom for a moment. That didn't seem right. At all. "Varanda, can I talk to you in private for a minute?"

"Oh, sure," Bloom said.

"Great," Flora said. She took Bloom's hand and started guiding them towards the alcove she'd used to explain to both Techna and Musa. "I'll bring her right back," she said, smiling at the other Winx. The three girls shared a shrug as Flora led Bloom out of the room.

"What did you want to talk about?" Bloom asked.

Flora hesitated for a moment before speaking. "Bloom, do you feel like you're repeating a part of your life? Like you've been here before?"

"How-?" Bloom gasped.

"What do you remember?" Flora asked. "The Trix? Darkar? Valtor?"

"Mandragora and the Ancestral Witches too," Bloom said. "You remember it too?"

"I remember it," Flora said. "I remember all of it, and a lot more. It's good to see you finally Awake, Bloom. I have a lot to tell you."

"So this has been happening for a while?" Bloom asked.

"Yes," Flora said. "It's been a long time actually. Something like ten thousand loops. I'm the only one who's Awake for all of them, but Musa and Techna are sometimes Awake too."

"And there's a whole... multiverse that's doing this?"

"Yes," Flora said. "I've been to a few of the other universes. Bloom... I need to know what you remember about the loop. Both Techna and Musa, when they awoke, remembered loops that weren't quite

baseline. I'd like to know what loop you remember. Was there anything strange that happened that made no sense?"

Bloom thought for a moment. "Not... really. I mean there was magic of course, but nothing that didn't at least sort of make sense."

"So you didn't see me turn into a vampire or use a gun?"

"What?" Bloom asked. "You're not a vampire and I doubt you'd ever even touch a gun!"

Flora smiled. "We loopers are often more than we appear," she said. "Nothing strange with Techna or Musa either?"

"No..." Bloom said cautiously. "Did you really mean what you said about the vampire thing?"

"Just a little," Flora said, opening her mouth to expose her fangs. "Only when I want to be one. I promise not to bite."

Bloom gave her friend an slightly disturbed look. "That's..."

"It's alright," Flora said, her teeth going back to normal. "I'll keep it to myself if you want me to. You really don't remember anything strange?"

"Not really," Bloom said. "Well, you always seemed to know what was going to happen next, but I guess that makes sense."

"I must have been playing it baseline then," Flora said. "Well, as close to baseline as I ever do these days."

"What do you mean?" Bloom asked.

"In baseline I fell for Helia," Flora said. "I don't do that anymore."

"Why not?" Bloom asked. "You two would make a great couple."

"Because I'm dating Techna," Flora said. "Not the Techna in there though. Awake Techna."

"But Techna... Timmy..." Bloom went cross-eyed. "I don't understand."

"Give it time," Flora said. "You'll figure it out eventually."

"I... you said we have thousands of loops to look forward to," Bloom said. "I guess I don't really have much choice."

"Not really," Flora said. "For what it's worth, welcome to the Infinite Loops, Bloom. It's good to see you again."

5.7

"Flora," Techna said as she smacked an over-grown robotic mousetrap with her bo staff. "Why are we humanoid reptiles of improbable occupation?"

"No idea," Flora said, slicing another robotic mouse hunter apart with her swords.

"I really don't like this loop," Musa said as she plunged her sai into another robot.

"I'm Mikey," Bloom said, spinning her nunchucks around. "Why am I Mikey? WHY am I Mikey?"

5.8

Flora couldn't help enjoying herself as she and Tecna explored the Hub again. Fand had been as good as her word, although Flora was pretty sure she'd expected something more extravagant as Flora's ideal loop. Bloom and Musa were around as well, and Flora had introduced them to the show that was their representation in the

Hub. The two of them had mixed feelings about it, but they'd come to the right conclusions. Which left the question of exactly what to do for the rest of the loop.

In the end the four Winx had gone their separate ways for the loop. Bloom was pursuing her old dream of becoming an artist, Musa was exploring the music of the Hub and the history behind it, and Flora and Tecna had moved to a city called Pittsburgh.

It was a beautiful city, cradled between two rivers. Glass and steel buildings stretched to the sky, but the hills that surrounded the city were covered in trees. Tecna had taken a teaching position at one of the local universities, a place called Carnegie Mellon University. She came home every day with stories about the robots and similar projects she and her students were working on.

Flora had found her own place in the City of Bridges. She'd accepted a position as a caretaker in the city's famous Phipps Conservatory, only a few blocks away from the building Tecna worked in. The greenhouse was enormous, and perhaps a half step short of Flora's idea of Heaven. She could spend all day there, and if it weren't for Tecna, she probably would.

Tecna concluded her morning lecture right on schedule. "I'll be expecting your papers by the end of the week," she said. "If you have any questions, you can visit me during my office hours. Class dismissed." She set about gathering up her lecture materials. In her haste, she dropped one of her folders, papers going everywhere.

"I'll get it," one of her students, a young man named Marcus, said, bending down to pick up the scattered paper.

"Thank you Marcus," Tecna said. "I just have a meeting I don't want to be late for. I should know better than to rush by now."

"Haste makes waste and all that," Marcus said. "And is it a meeting, or do you just have a lunch date with your girlfriend?"

"Okay, you caught me," Tecna said. "It's the second. And just how long have you known about her anyways?"

"Professor Xenia," he said, using the last name the loop had given Tecna, "the entire class knows. We've known for months that you're dating the cute caretaker over at the greenhouse."

"Oh," Tecna said. "I guess word travels fast."

"This is a college campus. Of course it does," Marcus said. "Hey, aside from Steven and Julianne, we all think the two of you are a great couple. Here." He handed her the folder. "I need to prep for my next class. Good luck Professor." He pushed on the door and paused for a moment before smacking his forehead and pulling it open.

Tecna shook her head and put her folder into her bag.

Flora was tidying up around the entrance when Tecna arrived. "Hey Tecna, how was class today?" Flora asked.

"The usual," Tecna said. "It turns out my lecture students are on to us."

"Oh?" Flora asked. "They are?"

"I'm told they think we're a cute couple," Tecna said. "How's the morning going for you?"

"Pretty well," Flora said. "Mostly some cleaning, a bit of work in the Orchid Room, nothing major."

"Your job seems so boring sometimes," Tecna said.

"So does yours," Flora said. "Anything exciting coming up?"

"Not at the moment," Tecna said. "You?"

"I have a tour group tomorrow," Flora said. "They're from a nearby elementary school. That's one of my favorite parts of the job, showing the kids around."

"What school?" Tecna asked.

"Some little school called Kentucky Avenue School," Flora said. "Their address is for Fifth Avenue though, so I'm not sure where they got the name from."

"Sounds fun," Tecna said.

"You should try the tour some time," Flora said.

"Maybe," Tecna said.

"Are you teaching tomorrow?" Flora asked.

"No."

"Then why don't you come and visit? I'll see if I can sneak you in at some point."

"Why not?" Tecna said.

Tecna watched Flora guiding the children and their teachers through the gardens, describing some of the flowers and what made them special. Seeing the children's reactions to the Butterfly Forest was touching. The expressions of wonder and delight on their faces as the butterflies fluttered around, over, and even on them were the closest thing Techna had found to magic in the Hub.

"You're pretty," a small voice said. "Why is your hair purple though?"

Tecna looked down and found a small boy, maybe eight years old, looking up at her. "Thank you," Techna said. "My hair's purple because I like it that way."

"Ah, okay!" the boy said. "The guide's pretty too. And nice."

"Can you keep a secret?" Tecna asked with a grin.

The boy smiled and nodded.

"That pretty guide's my girlfriend," Tecna said.

"Really?" the boy said, his eyes widening.

"Yep," Tecna said. "And she's even nicer than you think she is." She spotted a teacher looking around nervously. "I think your teacher's wondering where you are. You should go back to your group."

"Okay!" the boy said, hurrying off.

Tecna smiled, watching him as he went. The loops had taught her a lot. The old her would never have seen the value in a moment like that. She was all about her logic and her gadgets. But as she watched the boy mingle with his friends, no doubt spilling her "secret" to anyone who would listen, the woman she'd become took a moment to appreciate the simple joy of the children. She looked around, finding Flora in the midst of some curious children. She had the same look on her face as the children around her did.

This was why she'd fallen for Flynn all those loops back. His simple way of interacting with the world, so pure and untainted despite everything they'd gone through together, appealed to her in ways she could never describe. And it was the reason she was falling for Flora again, Great Dragon help her. Even if it wasn't how she'd originally imagined things working out, she couldn't bring herself to complain about it.

Flora glanced up and threw a quick smile at Tecna before turning back to the children at hand. Tecna smiled back. Sometimes, the loops were very kind indeed.

5.9 (Awesomedude17)

Flora Awoke to a strange tournament, and looked around.

Having already been through a few bar loops already, she recognized two particularly notable people.

Hanzo Hasashi, probably now Scorpion if he's not Awake, and Sub-Zero, who seemed off.

She felt a ping and looked around.

"So you're Awake?" Flora looked at the man who spoke, Raiden.

"Umm, yes. What's-"

"Quiet, we're about to begin."

"What?"

Soon, an old man appeared on the seat near the monks sitting nearby. He held his arms out and spoke.

"Welcome to my island, and you're all here for one reason."

Flora gulped.

"The Mortal Kombat tournament."

This is going to suck.

5.10 (lord Martiya)

It had been a "Friendly Trix" loop, one without disasters. Darkar had been dealt with surprisingly easy, what with Darcy seeing through the False Avalon's disguise and using the psychic link with the Dark Phoenix (put there so Darkar could eventually brainwash Bloom using his pawn as conduit) to fry both brains.

And yet, Valtor was back: a triad of cousins of the Trix had managed to get thrown to Omega, and as the clan of the official descendants of the Ancestral Witches tended to have triplets with the same powers as their foremothers one of them had been able to casually free herself, her sisters and Valtor from the ice cubes. And now they had barged in Alfea's gala, one at which Cloudtower's students and alumni had been invited, planning to strike fear in the Magical Dimension by taking on the head teachers of all the three schools at once.

Now they were engaging in the classic pre-battle banter, and Flora was studying the situation. Defeating Valtor without collateral damage was never easy, especially when he had three assistants almost as powerful as the Trix, and-Why was Valtor on his knees crying in pain, with blood coming out of his eyes, ears, nose and mouth? And why were his partners on their knees gasping for air.

"The basics! Someone so powerful that the headmistress doesn't trust herself to fight him one-on-one, and he forgets something as basic as "you stand still, you die"! That's pathetic!" Darcy shouted as she continued playing with Valtor's blood vessels.

"Not as pathetic as those idiots of our cousins, I know for a fact the clan always do their best to hammer the basics into all triplets' heads." Stormy complained as she played with the air she just took from her cousins' lungs.

"Shut up, at least you got the chance to try out those tricks of yours." Icy ordered as she prepared some icicles. "All I get to do is finish them off, and I can't even kill these idiots because they're immobilized."

Icy lowered her hand, and the four criminals saw their arms and thighs severed by large icicles.

"Have to remember this next time..." Flora commented as the rather annoyed Griffin had the even more annoyed Darcy help the fairies in saving the idiots' lives.

Author's Notes:

5.1: Really Musa? You've had those things since loop 2.10 and only *now* do you get around to introducing the concept of Befriending to your loop? For shame!

5.2: Winx meets Blinx the Time Sweeper. If you have to Google who that is, don't worry, I did too. An interesting concept for a game that probably should have recieved more love than it did.

5.3: Fand pays her debts.

5.4: Why yes, Pinkie Pie is a Chaos Goddess from Warhammer 40K. She's also a Sith Lord (no, really), a candy artificer (I'd explain, but I'm afraid to ask), and the founder of her own Lantern Corp. (Pink for Joy, in case you were wondering.)

5.5: Vampire Girl Talk! Also, if you get it, you get it. If you don't, I'm not explaining it, so don't ask.

5.6: Welcome to the Infinite Loops, Bloom! Don't worry, you'll get used to it eventually.

5.7: I don't think Bloom is a Michelangelo fan.

5.8: Fand's gift.

5.9: Flora's probably going to survive the tournament. She's an immortal vampire after all. She's certainly not going to *enjoy* it though.

5.10: I guess the Trix were feeling rather nasty that loop.

Chapter 6

More Loops terminology!

The Crash was the single biggest disaster to strike Yggdrasil since the unknown event that started the loops. It came about during the struggle to get the Mega Man loops going. During the attempt, an entire sub-universe was lost, a bunch more were almost lost, and the Sonic the Hedgehog loops were also almost lost (it makes sense in context). This had two major results.

The first was unleashing Waltz the MLE upon the inhabitants of Yggdrasil.

The second was the Crash, effectively a multiverse-spanning dimensional quake. It started several loopers going with damaged code, destroyed several key pieces of data, and just generally made a mess of things.

And even more Loops terminology! Isn't learning fun?

Looping is not a stress free occupation, and psychiatrists for loop-induced stress aren't exactly easy to come by (unless you're in Equestria, in which case they're pretty much everywhere, but that's not the point). Most loopers have a few screws lose as a coping mechanism, but some can't handle the stress and snap completely. There are two major known loop-based mental disorders, Sakura Syndrome and Setsuna Syndrome.

Sakura Syndrome is what happens when a looper internalizes the lack of consequences the loops offer in a negative way. Their sense of morality and restraint breaks down, and they come to regard nonloopers, and sometimes even their fellow loopers, as nothing more than playthings. The syndrome is named after its first victim, Haruno Sakura of the Naruto loops. Sufferers of Sakura Syndrome

are not MLEs, but they can be just as dangerous. Still, they are suffering and they deserve pity, not scorn.

Setsuna Syndrome is in many ways the inverse of Sakure Syndrome. Named for its first victim, Meiou Setsuna of Sailor Moon, this is what happens when a looper becomes dangerously attached to baseline. Whether out of a desire to return to what they are familiar with or a misguided belief that a perfect baseline run will somehow fix their loop, they will do everything in their power to keep the plot on the rails. While this may not sound so bad, many victims of Setsuna Syndrome will become violent if their efforts are opposed. While significantly less dangerous than victims of Sakura Syndrome, they are still people who need help.

On with the story!

6.1

Flora knocked on the door to Techna's room. "Techna, are you in there?"

"Flora? Is that you?" Techna's voice came from inside. "The door's unlocked if you want to come in."

Flora pushed the door open and stepped in. Techna was sitting at her desk with a complex schematic open on her computer. Her old PDA sat on the desk next to her, hooked up to her computer. "Techna, are you alright?" Flora said, coming over to stand behind her girlfriend. "I haven't seen much of you recently and I was wondering what you've been doing."

"Huh?" Techna said, looking up from her computer. "I'm fine, I've just been working on a project."

"What are you working on?" Flora asked.

"You know my first fused loop was with the Power Rangers," Techna said.

"Of course," Flora said. "You built your own Morpher too. Which you currently have plugged into your computer."

"Yes," Techna said. "I have a Morpher, but... I don't have a Zord. So I'm designing my own."

"Really?" Flora asked, looking over Techna's shoulder at the screen.

"Yes, I've been doing a lot of research into giant robots," Techna said.

"Is that what that Gundam marathon you did during our last Hub loop was about?" Flora asked.

"Yes," Techna said quickly. "Of course it was!"

Flora paused for a moment to look at Techna. "Of course it was," she said. "What do you have so far?"

"Well I was thinking of making four Zords," Techna said.

"Four?" Flora asked.

"Yes," Techna said. "A water Zord," she pulled up a schematic of something resembling a submarine, "a land Zord," the screen shifted to show something that looked sort of like a cross between a race car and the front end of a bullet train, "an air Zord," a schematic of what looked like a fighter jet covered the screen, "and a space Zord." A shuttle appeared on the screen.

"And they come together?" Flora asked.

"Yes," Techna said. "I'm still working on that part, but the end result should look like this." She pulled up another schematic on the screen. This one showed a much larger humanoid robot.

"So the land and water Zords become the legs?" Flora asked, studying the screen.

"Exactly," Techna said. "The space Zord's supposed to split to form the arms while the air Zord forms the body. I'm still working on the interfaces though."

"I'd say this looks good, but I don't really know all that much about giant robots," Flora said. "Do you plan to build them yourself?"

"Yes," Techna said. "I've spent some time working on expanding my pocket, so by my calculations I should have room for two of them already. It's going to take me a while to get my pocket large enough to hold all four of them, but it's going to take me a while to build the Zords anyways. If my math is correct, my pocket should be just barely large enough by the time I'm finished with the Zords."

"It looks like this is going to take you a long time..." Flora said, looking over the schematics again.

"Yeah, I know," Techna said. "Still, I've already gotten a good start on it."

"Oh?" Flora asked.

"I've already got my power source for the Zords," Techna said with a grin.

"Really? What?"

"I'll give you a hint," Techna said. "It's from our loop."

Flora blinked. From their loop? What could Techna use from this loop to power four- "You didn't," Flora said with a smile.

"I did," Techna said with an answering smile. "It's not like Darkar's getting any use out of it anyways."

"The Codex? Really?" Flora asked. "I still have the occasional bad dream about everything we went through to protect that thing back before Fand fixed the Relix problem."

"Why not?" Techna said. "It's powerful enough and it's already conveniently divided into four pieces."

"I see," Flora said.

"So," Techna said, closing down her program and turning to face Flora. "How would you like to help me build a giant robot?"

"Is this a date?" Flora asked with a mischievous smile.

"It might be," Techna said.

"Then I accept," Flora said. "When do we start?"

6.2 (MWKillKenny84)

Bloom Woke Up, not even six meters behind the Trix. A Ping and the extremely-near replies confirmed her that Tecna and Flora were also Awake.

It was nearly after the first big defeat of the trio of Witches, and consequently their first imprisonment in Light Rock.

Knowing, thanks to Flora, that that place was, basically, the realm of *certain things* that she would have **never** wished even on Valtor…

Well, she had checked, and in a baseline run she normally had certain privileges that stemmed from her being the sole survivor of the Domino Royal Family.

"Now, we will take the Trix at Light Rock, where they will remain until they will learn how to live in an honest way." Said the monk – warden from Rock Light, magic-suppressions tiaras on the Trix's foreheads

and handcuffs on their writs, ready to transport them to the magical prison / rehabilitation institution.

"And how will it be done, if I can ask?" Asked the redhead with the most normal tone she was able to muster.

"By playing happy songs and exposing the patients to sunny days, flowers, and positive concepts all the time."

"Tecna, what is the legal status of my parents, the Royal Family of Domino?"

"Officially Missing and/or Killed from the time of the last know attack of the Three Ancestral Witches."

"What can I do to spare the Trix Light Rock?"

"One moment that I search… ok Bloom, repeat after me: 'I, Princess Bloom of Domino, as the sole official survivor of the Royal Family of Domino, claim a Royal Right of Servitude on the cabal of Witches known as the Trix.'"

" *I, Princess Bloom of Domino, as the sole official survivor of the Royal Family of Domino , claim a Royal Right of Servitude on the cabal of Witches known as the Trix.* "

"'I also ask, under the lawful terms of the Royal Right of Servitude, to have the custody of them under mine and my friends' orders, until they will have repaid their debts against our persons and we will have judged that they will be ready to rejoin the Magical Dimension's Society at large.'"

" *I also ask, under the lawful terms of the Royal Right of Servitude, to have the custody of them under mine and my friends' orders, until they will have repaid their debts against our persons and we will have judged that they will be ready to rejoin the Magical Dimension's Society at large.* "

The Warden were perplexed, and justly, by Bloom's request, the Trix instead eyed her with suspicion and loathing.

"… and why, pray tell, we will want to accept this indenture under you all Little Fairy?" asked Stormy, that like her sisters wanted to not have any form of debt to a Fairy.

"Girls girls girls… how can I explain it?" Started to say the redhead Earth-raised Fairy to the Witches. "Oh, I know! A pair of little question first: you have been on Earth, right?" Single nod of Darcy, the calmest of the trio.

"Good. And have you seen some of our entertainment programs for little children like *Barney the Dinosaur* or the *Teletubbies* ?" There all of them assumed a green complexion and the expression of someone that want to vomit from the disgust.

"I will take your expression as a yes. You have as of now two choices.

"You can work for me, and if I will feel generous I will even spare you the skimpy French maid outfits; or you can go to Light Rock, and be subjected, given to what we have all heard from the Wardens here, to a twenty four hours, seven days non-stop therapy based on *those two things* .

"So, what do you choose?"

Instantly Darcy broke her restrain and hugged Bloom, the word 'you' repeated like a mantra, with Icy and Stormy kissing her feet and repeating the same thing.

"Head Warden, as you can see, they have choose me.

"Good day gentlemen." Said Bloom to the Monks, which by their own law had been forced to shut up and return to their fortress, accepting the reality of their new situation.

Because even if it was for a single Loop, she wanted to spare them such horrors!

6.3

Flora Awoke in the Red Fountain dorm she typically ended up in. Techna's male form sat on the bunk across from her, fiddling with his phone. Ah, this was going to be one of those loops.

"Hey Flynn, did you ever think of putting plants in the window?" Terry "Tech" asked. "It could use a bit more flora."

"You're awake then?" Flora asked. She sent out a ping.

"Yes," Techna said. "Another full gender flip loop?"

"It looks like," Flora said. She'd gotten one ping back. Musa or Bloom?

There was a sudden scream of anguish from across the hall. Flora and Techna shared a look.

Prince Steve of Solaria poked his head in the room. "Hey, could one of you come help? Blake just screamed and freaked out, and now he's hiding in the closet and won't come out."

"Sure," Flora said. "Could you go find Marcus? Tell him Blake's acting a bit loopy."

"Right, I'll do that!" Steve said, hurrying off.

"You think Bloom's looping?" Techna asked.

"It would explain the freak out," Flora said. "I know you're not entirely comfortable with loops like this."

"I've gotten used to them," Techna said. "You think Musa's looping too?"

"I don't think Bloom's in the proper state of mind to remember to send a Ping," Flora said. "That means the other ping was probably Musa, unless we have a visitor."

"That's very logical of you," Techna said.

"You're starting to rub off on me," Flora said. "Let's go check on Blake."

"Blake, are you in there?" Flora asked, crouched by the closet door. Techna stood near the door to the room.

There was a whimper from inside.

"Bloom, are you in there?" Flora asked.

"Flora, is that you?" Bloom asked from the closet.

"Yes," Flora said. "Techna's here too, and we think Musa's awake too, unless you sent out a ping."

"No, I didn't," Bloom said.

"Are you alright?" Flora asked.

"I'm a boy," Bloom said. "Why am I a boy? I'm supposed to be a girl."

Flora and Techna shared a look. "Sometimes the loops do that," Flora said gently. "It's not very common, but it does happen."

"I don't like it," Bloom said. "I'm a girl. I like being a girl."

"It won't last very long," Flora said. "Next loop you'll be back to your normal self."

"I still don't like it," Bloom said.

"It took me a while to get used to it too," Techna said. "It's not as bad as it seems."

"Flora, how long did it take you to get used to these loops?" Bloom asked.

Flora blinked. "They never really bothered me. I kind of liked them back when Techna and I were just starting to get back together after she started looping, although I never was as excited about them as Musa is."

"Musa likes loops like this?" Bloom asked, very confused.

"Yes, she does," Flora said. "She's kind of enthusiastic about them. She definitely has a thing for Raina."

"Raina?" Bloom asked.

"Riven, but as an Alfea student."

"Then... Sky?"

"Princess Skyla," Flora said. "She's waiting for you if you're interested."

"No!" Bloom said. "No! That's... I'm fine with you and Techna, but I'm not like that."

"That's alright," Flora said. "You don't have to if you don't want to."

"I don't," Bloom said.

"And that's fine," Flora said. "Can you come out of the closet now?"

There was a pause, then Bloom giggled. "You realize what you just said, right?"

"Of course I do," Flora said. "Are you ready come out, or are you going to spend the whole loop in there?"

"I guess so," Bloom said. "I don't like it but..."

"If it helps, it's nothing we haven't seen before," Flora said. "We've had loops like this before you were awake. You make a very cute boy."

The closet door opened a crack. "I do?"

"You do," Flora said.

"...I still don't like it," Bloom said, opening the door the rest of the way and taking a few cautious steps out.

"It'll be over soon," Flora said, pulling Bloom in for a hug. "You just have to make it through the loop."

"Okay," Bloom said.

Musa chose that moment to enter. "Hey Bloom, isn't this loop great?" Musa asked.

Musa really didn't understand why Bloom suddenly burst into tears, or why Techna and Flora were glaring at her.

6.4

Flora sat in Eden Hall looking around for a familiar face. She thought she knew a lot of loopers, but she didn't see anyone she knew.

"Boo," a voice came from behind her. Flora jumped and turned.

"Seras?" Flora said.

"Of course," the blonde vampire said. "How are you?"

"I'm doing well," Flora said with a smile. "Do you want to sit down?"

"Sure," Seras said, taking the seat across from Flora. "So, what have you been up to?"

"Well, another person from my loop started looping," Flora said. "She's not having an easy time adjusting, but she'll get there."

"Keep an eye on her," Seras said. "The loops don't need another Sakura."

"I'm more worried about Setsuna Syndrome," Flora said. "She really likes baseline."

"Watch out for that too," Seras said. "So, aside from that, how are you doing?"

"The usual," Flora said. "I had a nice hub loop with my friends, Techna's looking into building Zords to go with her Morpher, nothing particularly special."

"That sounds nice," Seras said. There was a moment of silence as Seras frowned. "Hey, Flora, something I don't think I ever asked. What's your last name?"

"My last name?" Flora asked in surprise. "Well it's-" She cut off, her eyes widening in shock. "It's- It's-"

"Something wrong?" Seras asked.

Flora looked at Seras with fear in her eyes. "Seras. I can't remember my last name. I know I have one, but I can't remember what it is. Why can't I remember my own last name?"

"Calm down," Seras said. "You can't remember your last name. Can you remember anyone's last name? Anyone from your loop?"

"...no," Flora said. "I can't. They should have last names. I know they have last names. Why can't I remember any of them?"

"It's possible they were lost," Seras said. "Yggdrasil's taken a lot of damage. They could have been lost in the event that started the loops. They could also have been lost in the Crash."

"I... I guess," Flora said. "I can't remember my own last name."

"Flora..." Seras said. "You know I consider you my sister, right?"

"Yeah, you told me," Flora said. "Thank you for that, but..."

"Flora, if you'd like..." Seras began. "You could use my last name until you find your own."

Flora blinked. "You'd really let me do that?"

"You're my sister," Seras said. "And Flora Victoria does have a nice ring to it."

"I guess it does," Flora said. "If you're okay with this... I think I'd like that. I won't use it all the time, but when I'm out of my home loop, Flora Victoria it is."

"Wonderful," Seras said. She went over to the bar and came back with two glasses. She handed one to Flora, then raised her own. "To family."

"To family," Flora said.

6.5 (lord Martiya)

"It's not me!" Lucy cried out.

"Really?" Darcy asked sweetly. Then, brandishing the sax and her newly fuzzy hair, she shouted: "THEN WHY DOES IT HAPPEN ONLY WHEN YOU'RE IN THE SAME ROOM?! TELL ME, WHY DO YOU RUIN MY HAIR EVERY TIME?! Oh, and theirs too."

Icy's and Stormy's hair was in fact equally fuzzy (for Stormy it meant it was LESS fuzzy than usual). All the Trix had strange clothes they wouldn't willingly wear unless paid a lot, and they looked FURIOUS. At least Icy did, alongside Darcy.

"It's not like we mind the music, in fact it's catchy, but these clothes are so not our style." Stormy added, barely caring about the situation.

"They're starting to get it." Bloom commented as she observed her handiwork from afar.

"Bloom, why are you doing that?" Flora asked.

"It HAD to be done: with Lucy they look like the Misfits, the villains in an old cartoon. And the Lucy lookalike was the boss."

Flora facepalmed.

"Now that I think, when Aisha's around we look like the protagonists, with Tecna as our incredibly advanced computer..." Bloom mused. "Bloom and the Holowinx has a nice ring, doesn't it?"

"Only when you can outsing me." Musa replied.

6.6

"Padawan Flora," Master Ki-Adi Mundi said. "Your relationship with Senator Techna of Naboo has been found in violation of the Jedi code. This meeting of the Jedi Council has been convened to determine whether you shall be cast out of the order altogether. You will of course be given the opportunity to defend yourself."

"I understand, masters," Flora said, standing firm.

"It seems you do not," Mace Windu said. "You have violated the teachings of our order. You know the penalty."

"I have done nothing wrong," Flora said.

"A lover, you have taken," Yoda said. "Dangerous, attachment is."

"You mean love," Flora said.

"Call it what you will," Kit Fisto said. "It is dangerous, especially in one so powerful as you."

"Why?" Flora asked, her voice just short of making it a demand. "Why is it so dangerous?"

"Attachment leads to fear," Yoda said. "Fear of loss. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering."

"So you've told me," Flora said. "But without attachment, what are we? Attachment is part of being alive. You cannot deny that."

"Attachment is not for the Jedi," Mundi said. "It is dangerous."

"It is necessary!" Flora countered. "Without it, we would have no reason to protect and serve the people!"

"Misunderstand, you do," Yoda said. "Attachment to the many, that is the way of the Jedi. Attachment to one, that is the way of the Dark Side."

Flora took a deep breath, fighting to control her emotions. "I refuse to believe that," Flora said. "I love Techna, and that love has done nothing but strengthen and support me, even in the darkest of times."

"But a fragile, that strength is," Yoda said. "Vulnerable to loss. To misfortune."

"I would rather have loved and lost than never loved at all," Flora paraphrased. "Without it, I would be less of a person than I am. I would not have the strength I do."

"But you will lose in the end," Plo Koon said. "All love ends in loss."

Not mine, Flora thought, but didn't say.

"And that loss will destroy you," Koon continued. "In one so powerful as you, that would be disastrous."

"You assume I have the emotional maturity of a child," Flora said. "It would hurt, but it would not break me."

"Bold words, but even you are not invulnerable to loss," Ki-Adi Mundi said. "The Dark Side will feed on your fear and your pain, and you will fall."

"So I must forsake all emotion, all the things that let me know I'm alive," Flora said. "If that is the price of being a Jedi, then the Jedi are wrong. Suppressing emotion is dangerous and-" Flora cut off as a sudden realization hit her.

"Padawan?" Obi-Wan Kenobi asked from his place behind her. He'd told her about the Grey Jedi initiative, but she'd insisted on making her case to the council. He'd told her how often that worked, but she'd refused to listen. One of these loops he was going to have a nice, easy-going padawan who didn't stir up trouble. One of these loops.

Oh, who was he kidding, he thought the Council was wrong too.

"Flora?" Obi-Wan asked.

"They're afraid," Flora said in a voice so soft Obi-Wan could barely hear it. "That's why they're like this."

"Padawan, if you are speaking to us, we cannot hear you," Kit Fisto said.

Flora looked up and squared her shoulders. "You are wrong about attachment. And you are wrong about the Force."

"Padawan, you are going against a thousand years of Jedi teachings," Plo Koon said.

"The teachings are wrong," Flora said. "And you, all of you who sit on this council, you are too afraid to see it. You were raised to abandon your emotions, to block them out, to suppress them. You do not know how to handle or control your own feelings, let alone those of others. And you're frightened. You fear what you do not understand, and try to destroy it because of that. You have no more right to judge me for my love of Techna than a blind man has to judge a painting for its colors. Fear is the path to the Dark Side? Then perhaps the Jedi order has already fallen."

There was a long and awkward silence in the wake of Flora's declaration.

"Master Kenobi, your padawan clearly has not learned our ways," Ki-Adi Mundi said, breaking the silence. "I suggest you review the basics with her."

"Actually, master," Obi-Wan said, "I believe she has made an excellent point. Perhaps we are too narrow, too restrictive in our teachings. Perhaps fewer would fall to the Dark Side if we taught our pupils to understand and master their emotions, rather than to ignore them."

"Enough," Mace Windu said. "This order has survived for over a thousand years because of its teachings. Your padawan stands in defiance of those teachings. If she refuses to return to the path of the Jedi, she will be expelled from the order."

"I refuse to return to your path," Flora said. "Expel me if you wish, but I will not forsake myself to comfort your fears."

"Then you are hereby expelled from the order of the Jedi, Padawan Flora Victoria," Kit Fisto said. "Your lightsaber."

"Does not belong to you," Flora said. "I will not walk your path, but I will walk my own." With that she turned and left the room.

"Thank you for assisting me with the Grey Jedi order," Flora said to her old master.

"Not at all," Obi-Wan said. "That was very impressive speech you gave to the council."

"Thank you," Flora said. "They really are terrified by the concept of emotions."

"Maybe they are," Obi-Wan said. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a data crystal. "In case you're interested, I made a copy of your speech." He offered Flora the crystal. "You should keep it."

"Thank you," Flora said, taking the crystal. "I'm sure Techna will enjoy seeing it."

"I'm sure she will," Obi-Wan said. "If you will excuse me, I have to attend to the younglings."

"Of course, master," Flora said. She looked down at the crystal in her hand. "There is Passion, yet Peace. Serenity, yet Emotion. I am one with the Force, and the Force is alive."

6.7

"What do you want to do this loop?" Flora asked.

"I'm still working on my Zords," Techna said. "I have the sky Zord mostly finished, but the water one is giving me trouble."

"You've been working on them for five loops straight," Flora said. "Why don't you take a break?"

"Well... I suppose I could take some time off," Techna said. "What did you have in mind?"

"Do you remember our hub loop, and the hub version of us?" Flora asked.

"You mean the parts that aren't in our loop yet, right?" Techna asked.

"Yes," Flora said. "I'd like to try meeting this Roxy. Just because that part of our story isn't part of the loop yet doesn't mean she doesn't exist, or at least it shouldn't."

"That does seem interesting," Techna said. "Just give me a bit to pack a few things and we can go."

The two fairies made their way down to the inter-realm transfer station. Either one of them could have teleported them both to Earth, but sometimes it was nice to use more normal methods. They entered the building when Flora suddenly stopped.

"Flora?" Techna asked. "What's wrong?"

"Fand," Flora said, pointing at a fairy with extremely ornate wings who appeared to be waiting for someone.

"Our admin?" Techna asked. "That's her?"

"Yes," Flora said. "What's she doing here?"

Fand turned and spotted them. "Flora, Techna," she said, making her way towards the loopers. "I need to talk to you."

"About what?" Techna asked.

"About what the two of you are trying to do," Fand said. "Let's go somewhere a bit more private. I have a lot to tell you and it's not something I want overheard."

"What do you want to talk to us about?" Techna asked.

"The two of you are trying to find Roxy," Fand said. "I need the two of you not to do that."

"Why?" Flora asked.

"Because if you find her, there's a very good chance you'll force the next part of the loop to activate before it's ready, and that's a problem."

"Season four?" Flora asked.

"That's what it's called in the hub world, yes," Fand said. "It's...broken."

"Broken?" Techna asked.

"Not all of it," Fand said. "The problem is, partway through it, there's a... divergence. Two possible timelines."

"The second movie?" Techna said. "I thought that was just a variant."

"No," Fand said. "It's all that's left of one of two possible baselines. The other is the end of season four and the seasons that follow it, but they're not intact either."

"What do you mean?" Flora asked.

"They've been corrupted," Fand said. "The code for that part of your timeline has been damaged. I'm afraid to let you go through that period because I don't know what it will do to you. It could permanently damage your code."

"What if you just add the part that isn't broken to our loop?" Flora asked.

"I can't do that," Fand said. "I have to decide which baseline to use before I start adding to the loop, and I don't know which one's the right one. It's either a corrupted baseline or a non-existent baseline."

"Can you fix it?" Techna asked.

"That's my big project," Fand said. "Sorting through damaged code is my specialty, which is why I was assigned to this loop in the first place."

"I thought it was because you were a fairy..." Flora said.

"That too," Fand said. "Anyways, I've been working on fixing the later sections of your loop, but they're not ready yet. Until they are, I'd appreciate it if you didn't try to force anything from them."

"We understand," Techna said. "Sorry for causing you trouble."

"Not at all," Fand said. "You two are my favorite couple after all! Well, I have to go. You two stay out of trouble and keep being adorable!" She vanished in a flash of light.

There was a moment of silence before Flora spoke. "I never know how to deal with her," Flora said.

"I can see why," Techna said. "So, do you have anything else you want to do with this loop?"

"Not really," Flora said. "Do you want any help with your Zords?"

"Sure," Techna said.

5.8 cont. (lord Martiya)

It was Bloom's first Loop in the Hub, and they had watched the series. Leading to Flora having to spend two days convincing her friend she wasn't a Mary Sue (whatever it was) and coaxing her out of the cave she had created, before explaining her they didn't know if the second movie or the tv versions were supposed to be the baseline timeline.

"It's obvious, the second movie." Bloom stated.

"How do you know?" Flora asked.

"In the fourth season Nabu dies or whatever happens to him as the indirect consequence of me letting the Earth Fairies free, giving the Fairy Hunters their chance to strike... Except I would NEVER be THAT stupid."

"Uh?"

"Flora, I was a fairy tale junkie. And do you know why the English word for us is so similar to 'fair'? Because the peoples who remembered the fairies, elves and what came with them feared the Fair Folk would do them unspeakable things if they called them anything but fair.

"In the ancient legends the fairies would kidnap people, grant you wishes that backfire horribly, rape and torture you, and expect you to be grateful because their morals are so alien they have no idea they didn't help you, and if you fail to show gratitude they'll do you things that the Trix wouldn't do to their worst enemy.

"Those legends had to come somewhere, the first we saw of Earth's native fairies was one of them possessing her best friend's daughter to try and commit genocide, and I still freed them. I'm not THAT stupid."

"What if you hit your head off-screen at some point?" Musa asked.

"Well, then it could-"

Bloom returned in the cave crying.

"Strange, shouldn't be Stella to do this?"

6.8

Flora stared at Alfea's quad through the dorm window. Friendly Trix loops rarely ended well, but this was a new one. They'd set the *pavement* on fire. "How did they even do that?" Flora asked.

"I have no idea," Bloom said. "That shouldn't burn."

"You're sure?" Musa asked. "Because it certainly looks like it's burning."

"Musa, if there's one thing I know, it's fire," Bloom said. "I'm telling you, pavement shouldn't burn like that."

"That's because you're not a chemist," Techna said, entering the room. "You're only thinking of oxygen fires."

"What kind of fire's going on down there?" Flora asked.

"Chlorine Trifluoride," Techna said. "I don't know how the Trix got their hands on the stuff or what they were trying to do with it, but it got out."

"What can we do about it?" the non-looping Stella asked.

"Absolutely nothing except wait for it to die on its own," Techna said. "You don't put a Chlorine Trifluoride fire out. You don't even try."

Author's notes:

6.1: Zords!

6.2: Rescue from the land of Barney!

6.3: Bloom is not having an easy time with the loops.

6.4: It's a good thing Flora's not the type to panic. Also, Flora has a last name! The one name thing was driving me crazy!

6.5: I believe this is a reference to something called Jem and the Holograms, but I'm not certain. It's certainly odd though.

6.6: Have you ever had an epiphany about a show or a movie? I had one about Star Wars. This was the result.

6.7: Finally, an in-universe reason why the rest of the series isn't looping yet!

5.8 cont.: Well, Bloom certainly has an opinion on which baseline's the real one. Honestly though, I think this is looper Bloom being smarter than baseline Bloom. It's kind of a common thing, and the reason most loopers hate mini-me loops.

6.8: Chlorine Trifluoride. It can set asbestos on fire. Don't even think about messing with this stuff at home.

Chapter 7

7.1

Techna woke up in her bed. Last she could remember she'd been working on her Zords. Did she crash the loop by accident?

"Good morning," Flora said from her seat next to Techna's bed. "How are you feeling?"

"Confused," Techna said, sitting up. "What happened?"

"Nanobots, apparently," Flora said. "You... ate them? Breathed them in? Something."

"What kind of nanobots?" Techna asked.

"You'd have to ask Timmy," Flora said. "He's looking at some of them over at Red Fountain. As for what they did to you... You were kind of... drunk."

"Drunk?" Techna asked.

"Yeah," Flora said. "You turned Alfea's quad into a terraforming project. Bloom's still working on getting rid of the volcanoes."

"I can't... How?"

"I don't know," Flora said. "It was very strange."

"I imagine it would be," Techna said. "I'm sorry I put you through this."

"It's alright," Flora said. "Unfortunately, you're probably not going to live this one down."

"Don't tell me," Techna said.

"That's right," Flora sighed. "Musa recorded the whole thing."

Techna moaned and flopped back down on her bed.

7.2 (Crossoverpairinglover)

A metal spaceship, larger than Magix itself, was floating in the sky, and more like it were descending from the sky above.

Spewing forth from it were countless smaller ships; some that looked more like transports, others that were clearly more fighter plane-esque creations.

Turning to her more tech-savvy half, Flora pointed towards the ships. "Is that the Empire, or the Federation?"

Techna shook her head. "You do know there is the Trade Federation, and the Galactic Federation, right? I am pretty sure you mean the one with the Vulcans, and no, that's not a Federation force. The Enterprise does not fly T.I.E fighters".

The rather business casual fighter craft were currently flying in protective formation in the directions of Red Fountain, Cloudtower and Alfea, suggesting whoever was directing them was somewhat genre savvy.

That someone, come to think of it, was probably the darkly dressed man with brown hair walking towards them, flanked by a possibly endless sea of white armored gunmen.

He came to a stop in front of them, about two lightsaber stabbings away. So, this probably wasn't an invasion.

"So, I take it you one of you is the anchor?" the man questioned. Flora nodded, but Techna looked confused.

"Aren't you supposed to be in a black metal suit?" she asked.

The man had a unpleasant look on his face at the mention of that suit. "I don't particularly like getting maimed, and sometimes I end up in charge of the Galactic Empire without a lava bath" the man quickly brought his face back to a professional tone "I'm here to inform you that Abeloth's prison this loop is located somewhere in your galaxy this loop, and I request your aide as local guides to go find and kill the thing before some idiot releases it."

"Abeloth?" Flora asked.

"The living representation of Chaos in the force, possesses people, has a disturbing desire for companionship. It's something that should be killed before my oldest grandson is born to quite possibly awaken it by mistake. So, where might I find the local blackhole clusters where its planet should be located in?"

The two fairies exchanged uneasy looks at looking for this 'Abeloth'.

"We...sort of have school" Techna pointed out.

The Clone Wars veteran turned emperor shrugged. "I can order some of my T.I.E fighters to blow it up if that makes it easier for you."

"Let's...not".

7.3

"Well, look at this!" Captain Malcolm Reynolds said as he walked into the town, his engineer and Zoe behind him. "Appears we got here just in the nick of time! What does that make us?"

"Big damn heroes, sir!" Zoe said.

"Ain't we just," Mal said. "Sorry to interrupt folks, but ya'll got something that belongs to us, and we'd like it back."

Flora, currently tied to a wooden stake, shook her head. The local Anchor certainly enjoyed the chance to be dramatic.

"This is a holy cleansing," one of the townsmen said. "You cannot think to thwart God's will."

"Ya'll see the girl with the purple hair next to me?" Mal said. "Ya'll seem to be trying to burn her girlfriend. She don't take kindly to that. So really it's her will ya'll should worry about thwarting."

Techna made her way over to stand in front of Flora while the townsfolk processed this. "What are you doing? We both know you could get out of this without any trouble."

"I didn't want to scare them any more than I already had," Flora said.

"And you were just going to let them burn you," Techna said. "Priorities, Flora. Priorities."

Flora had the grace to look somewhat sheepish.

"Cut her down," Mal said.

"The girl is a witch," the townsman said.

"She ain't a witch," Mal said. "She's a fairy. Hell, ask her real nice, she might even show you her wings. Now cut her the hell down."

"We are going to have a long talk when we get back to the ship," Techna said.

"I'm sorry," Flora said.

"When the two of you make up," Zoe said, "do try to keep it discreet."

The two fairies blushed at that.

Bloom Awoke in a canoe surrounded by ice. Given her usual experiences with ice, it's understandable that her first reaction was a somewhat panicked one.

"Hey, you okay back there sis?" the boy in the front of the canoe said, turning to face her. "You look like the midnight sun's getting to you. You're not feeling... loopy, are you?"

Bloom blinked. "Oh, uh, yes, loopy, like I could use an Anchor."

"Well, you've come to the right guy," the boy said. "Sokka, Anchor for the Avatar loops and non-bender extraordinaire."

"Bloom," Bloom said. "I'm a looper from the Winx Club loops."

"Well, you can tell us all about it once we get Aang out of the iceberg."

Aang and Sokka sat on Appa watching Bloom struggle through a water bending form. "Hard to remember Katara used to have that much trouble with it too," Aang said.

"Maybe for you," Sokka said. "You don't see all the loops where she isn't Awake."

"I guess," Aang said.

"So, what are we doing about the Fire Lord?" Sokka asked. "I know Zuko's Awake this time around and the two of you have a plan."

"Nothing special," Aang said. "Just the usual Zuko captures me and brings me in, I break out and remove Ozai's and Azula's bending, and Zuko takes the throne."

"And until then you're going to teach Kataroom here how to bend?" Sokka asked.

"Sokka," Aang said, wincing. "That's awful."

"Blootara?"

"No."

"Fine," Sokka said. "You gonna teach her... that?"

"No," Aang said. "It's pretty much an emergency only thing that can only be used for a few hours once every four weeks. Not really worth it. And I don't like it."

"That works," Sokka said.

Bloom lost control of her water. It splashed to the ground, splattering her feet with mud. Sighing, she dropped back into the first stance and started again.

Master Paku's attack came roaring in as a wall of water. Bloom spun and the wave broke, turning into two streams of water that she directed back at the old master. She added a row of rising ice spikes to that, coming at him from three directions at once. He moved, bringing her two water streams together and freezing them to form a wall to block the spikes. The wall melted and flowed into a rising column of water that flew towards Bloom. She lashed out and broke the stream in the middle, taking control of the flow. She pulled it around, forming it into a cloud of mist that hid her from her opponent. Drawing on something she'd seen Toph do, Bloom opened a hole in the ice beneath her and closed it behind her. She glided through the ice, coming up behind Paku and unleashing a blast of icy water. He spun and blocked the attack, a massive back-splash forming where her water struck his hand.

"Very impressive," he said.

"I had a good teacher," Bloom said, pulling up two more streams of water from the ice.

"I can see that," Paku said, pulling his own water from the ice.

Bloom swung her hand and one of her streams whipped out at Paku. He met it with his own water whip and smirked. He was caught off guard when Bloom's second stream came around and blindsided him. He shook it off and spun back to her, the ice around him rising into the air. It formed into a spiraling twister of water that he hurled at Bloom. She pushed her hands out in front of her and it broke around her like a wave on a rock. But Paku wasn't done yet. The water formed into a wall around Bloom that spun, faster and faster, closing in on the fairy.

Bloom threw her arms to the sides, pulling the water into pair of columns that she merged into a single stream of water that she hurled at the old master. Just as she did, Paku hurled his own blast of water at Bloom. The two rushes of water struck their targets at the same time, knocking both of them to the ground where they lay, stunned.

"Wanna call that a draw?" Bloom asked, dazed.

"So, what do you think of the loop?" Aang asked, sitting next to the red haired fairy as night fell.

"It's... nice," Bloom said. "I prefer my home loop, but this isn't that bad."

"You really need to lighten up, Sparkles," Toph said. "Expect the worst of a loop and that's what you'll get."

"Sorry," Bloom said. "I just, I like my home, and I don't like things being so different."

"Get used to it," Sokka said. "It happens all the time."

"That doesn't make me feel better," Bloom said.

"You'll get used to it," Zuko said. "It will take some time, but you'll learn."

"Well, I think that's enough for today," Sokka said. "Good night all!"

7.5 (Drakohahn)

Flora Woke up to find a new face replacing Musa. Taking the few moments it took for her Loop memories to come, the plant fairy inspected the music fairy. Said replacement was very different from her friend; long pink hair instead of short and black and a preference for more formal dresses than Musa's hip styles. She also focused more on a classic singing style compared to Musa's DJ beats. Flora's loop memories came and revealed her name to be Lacus.

The Winx Anchor let out a ping, getting three responses. However, Flora knew that Techna and Bloom weren't Awake yet this Loop. So, she asked Lacus when she came out of her bedroom in the morning.

"Hello Lacus, are you Awake?"

"Yes," the pinkette answered with a smile. "though, I am feeling a bit Loopy."

"That's good," Flora said. Then she frowned a bit in thought. "My friends aren't Awake right now, but there were two other Pings."

"Oh, my boyfriend and girlfriend!" Lacus exclaimed in understanding before continuing in a calmer tone. "I'm talking with them right now. Apparently, they're both in the other schools of this world."

Flora paused at the implication. She frowned when she spoke a moment later, "You're talking to them right now? You guys have telepathy?"

The pinkette frowned in thought, "I guess you could say that, but that doesn't quite convey the full sense of communication. Oh, and they say hello."

"Tell them I say hello back..." The Winx Anchor replied, a bit flatfooted. She hadn't really encountered this kind of scenario before. She then inquired, "So, I understand your... boyfriend winding up in the Red Fountain school for Specialists, but why did your girlfriend end up in the Cloud Tower school for Witches?"

"In-loop reason, her father pushed her towards dark arts from a young age, which was helped by her having a higher aptitude for negative energy than positive. Out-of-loop reason, she ended up going crazy in our baseline and thus Yggdrasil seems to like putting her into darker roles," Lacus stated casually, but then shrugged. "At least, that's what it feels like to us."

Flora looked sympathetic, "That doesn't sound very nice of Yggdrasil."

"We're used to it," Lacus shrugged again. "And if it hadn't been for the Loops, we wouldn't have this bond now."

7.6 (lord Martiya)

"It's impossible..." Faragonda said, still in shock. "Nobody can do that!"

"Actually, we likely know a way..." Icy pointed out. "But it wouldn't be so easy."

"He didn't even use magic..." Flora said, surprised. In all her loops she still had to see that one.

"That's what he does: the impossible." Zenigata pointed out. "Oy, Lupin! You proved you can, now give it back, or at least give it to Fujiko! It's not a nice sight!"

Lupin laughed, continuing to fly thanks to the stolen Dragonfire while dressed in Bloom's outfit.

This was not supposed to be a Friendly Trix Loop... But with Lupin having already proven that stealing the Dragonfire was possible, the Trix had no reason to be hostile. Thankfully, disaster had been averted when their impossible task of choice had become helping Zenigata in arresting Lupin and, most importantly, KEEPING HIM IN (Zenigata had mentioned he had arrested him a few times, but the master thief always escaped). Somehow, the Winx had been roped into helping.

That was why they were running inside Diaspro's surprisingly large basement: Lupin and his crew (all Loopers and Awake, with only Flora and Zenigata on the other side Looping) had been sighted there, and-Was that the Relix Gate? Yes, Stella had solved it with fashion knowledge. The group jumped in, ready to face whatever trap Lupin had prepared, and-

"PLEASE STOP IT! IT BURNS!" Darkar cried.

"Have at least a little dignity and suffer in silence." Valtor replied, pain in his voice.

"Lupin! Explain, now!" Zenigata ordered.

"Well, Pops, we were curious about what the Admins had put in place of the Ultimate Power, so we retrieved it... And found out it were yaoi fanfictions about this so-called ultimate evil and Lord Evil there. You can guess the rest." Lupin replied as Fujiko continued reading the stories out loud.

Then Icy tried to freeze Lupin's crew, and the chase was back on.

7.7

"Bloom, if you want to fly, you can just grow wings, remember?" Techna asked.

"I know," Bloom said. "But in my last fused loop, I saw some people who used fire to fly, and I wanted to see If I could do it too."

"Whenever you're ready, Bloom," Flora said.

Bloom pressed her heels together and held her hands out at a slight angle. Fire burst from her hands and feet and she rose unsteadily into the air.

"It's working," Flora said. "Congratulations, Bloom."

"Thanks!" Bloom said, struggling to maintain her balance.

Techna suddenly tilted her head as she stared at Bloom's efforts to stay airborne. Then she straightened up, an excited look on her face. She pulled out her current pocket personal assistant device and set to work on something.

"Techna?" Flora asked. "What are you doing?"

"Just an idea," Techna said. "Nothing important."

"Can we see it?" Bloom asked, carefully coming in for a landing.

"Well... okay," Techna said. She pulled up a full-sized holographic screen that hovered over her phone. She swiped her hand and it spun to let Flora and Bloom see it. It had three windows open. A looping video of Bloom's flight filled the top right. In the bottom, a half-finished 3D line diagram hovered. In the top left...

"Really Techna?" Flora asked as she looked at the video clip in the top left. "Iron Fairy?"

7.8

"I will make you, a MAAAAAAN!"

Flora and Techna shared a look. "Nope," the two fairies said in unison as they turned and walked away from the mad scientist and his creation.

7.9

"And now for the final touch," Icy said. Her magic reached out to seal the pitiful and helpless fairy in ice.

Bloom smirked. This was what she'd been waiting for. The ice began to form around her, and she reached out with the strange power she'd picked up in her fused loop. The ice melted into water that flowed in a ring around Bloom.

"What?" Icy demanded in shocked rage.

"What's wrong, Icy?" Bloom asked, shifting into a waterbending stance. "Afraid of getting wet?" Bloom shifted her body and the water responded, lashing out in whip that sent the ice witch reeling.

"Get her!" Icy snarled, shaking her head.

"RAAARRRGGGHHH!" Nut bellowed, charging the fairy. Bloom moved like a dancer and a cascade of water slammed him into a wall before turning to ice, imprisoning the ogre.

Bloom smiled as she pulled liquid from the air to form another stream of water.

"Take this, fairy!" Stormy shouted, lightning launching from her hands towards Bloom. Bloom pushed out a thin mist of water that rendered the lightning impotent. The mist reformed into a stream of water which Bloom used to blast Stormy before freezing her to the wall alongside the ogre.

"Ice Spiral!" Icy shouted, throwing icicle daggers at Bloom.

"Thanks!" Bloom said, melting the icicles into water before spinning the stream around her body to slam Icy against the wall and, in a rather ironic twist, freeze her solid.

"Dark Vortex!" Darcy said, her power rippling off her hands.

"Enchantix!" Bloom said. An explosion of flame burst from the Enchantix fairy who had replaced the helpless girl. "Fire Ray!" The orange beam slammed Darcy against a wall where she lay still.

Icy's ice prison exploded into a cloud of fragments. "Who are you?" the witch demanded.

Bloom smiled. "Bloom. Guardian Fairy of the Dragon Flame and Master Waterbender of the Southern Water Tribe."

"The Dragon Fire?" Icy gasped. "That power belongs to us!"

"You want it?" Bloom asked. "You can have it. Dragon Energy!"

Icy quickly decided that she really didn't want the Dragon Fire that badly.

7.10

Bloom walked through the crowded Eden Hall, looking for a familiar face. So far she hadn't seen anyone from either her own loop or the fused loops she'd been in. Granted, she hadn't been in all that many fused loops, but still.

"Hello," a voice said from behind her. "You look like you're looking for someone."

Bloom turned and- "Icy?!" Bloom asked, jerking back in surprise. What was that witch doing *here* ?'

"Icy?" the white-haired woman asked with a frown. "I really don't like it when people use that nickname."

"Nickname?" Bloom asked. "You mean you're not Icy?"

"I'm Queen Elsa of Arendelle," the woman said. "I have ice powers, if that's what you're asking about."

"No," Bloom said. "Well, sort of. You just... look like someone from my loop."

"And her name's Icy?" Elsa asked.

"Yes," Bloom said.

"What were her parents thinking?" Elsa asked, shaking her head. "Judging by your reaction, you don't get along with this Icy?"

"Not really," Bloom said. "The first time I met her she tried to kill me by freezing me solid."

Elsa's eyes narrowed. "I can see why you wouldn't like her."

"You seem angry," Bloom said.

"Sorry, bad memories," Elsa said, shaking herself. "My baseline's not the easiest. Hey, why don't I buy you a drink and we can share stories?"

"Sure," Bloom said. "I have to warn you though, I only started looping recently, so I don't have that many stories."

"That's alright," Elsa said. "You'll get more."

"That's what I'm afraid of," Bloom said.

7.11 (Awesomedude17)

"Oh no. Oh no. Oh my no. NO!"

Flora burst open the doors to wherever Techna was screaming...

"Techna!"

"Flora, you're Awake!"

"Techna, you're... What the?"

"Yeah, I know." Techna replied, looking over the Fazbear Four, now treating her like a queen.

"I have no words for this."

"Take a picture though, I am pretty sure that Freddy will be embarrassed about this."

"Have I told you how much I love you?" Flora said, taking out a camera.

Techna laughed as Flora took a picture of the Fazbear Four being her slaves.

7.12

"You're not Vicky," the brown haired, pink hatted, bucktoothed boy said.

"No," Musa said. "My name's Musa."

"I'm Timmy," the boy said. "You look a bit strange. Are you loopy?"'

"Just a bit," Musa said. "I'm looking for a good place to Anchor."

"That's me," Timmy Turner said. "Welcome to my loop. Where you from?"

"The Winx loops," Musa said.

"What's that like?" Timmy asked.

"Fairies," Musa said. "I'm a fairy."

"Oh," Timmy said, grinning. "You're going to love this. Wanda, Cosmo! You can come out!"

A small pink haired woman appeared, floating on comically undersized wings. Beside her, a similarly undersized green haired man appeared.

"You're a fairy?" the pink haired woman, presumably Wanda, asked.

"Yes, the Guardian Fairy of Music," Musa asked. "What are you?"

"We're fairies too!" the green haired man said brightly.

"If you're a fairy, where are your wings? Where's your wand?" Wanda asked suspiciously.

"I don't use a wand, and I only have wings when I transform," Musa said.

"Are you *sure* you're a fairy?" Wanda asked.

"I'm sure," Musa said. "I'll show you. Enchantix!" A burst of music emanated from Musa as she transformed. "See? Fairy."

"I don't know..." Wanda said.

"Come on Wanda," Timmy said. "She's a fairy. Now let's have some fun!"

7.13

Loop One

I don't know what to make of this. I seem to have traveled through time in some fashion. If this Flora is to be believed, this will happen again. My friend Tina is apparently a boy named Timmy, and my

boyfriend Flynn is apparently this Flora. It seems illogical, but the evidence is overwhelming. Flora's memory of the events of those three years is impeccable. Better than my own even! She claims that this has happened to her hundreds of times. I have no proof of this, but I likewise cannot disprove it. Still, it would explain how Flynn always seemed to know what was going to happen before it did.

Flynn. I think that Flynn and Flora being one and the same is the hardest aspect of this situation for me to accept. I liked Flynn. I would even say I loved him. But I don't feel the same way about Flora, which is illogical. Most of my feelings towards Flora are illogical. I feel like I should know her, and I do, but at the same time I do not. I feel like I should trust her, but I also feel like she has somehow betrayed me. I loved Flynn, but he was never real. Instead, Flora is the real person. She is Flynn, but I do not love her. I cannot reconcile my feelings about this. Still, if she's told me the truth, I have a long time ahead of me to work this out. I will deal with this later.

According to Flora, a virtual repeat of the last three years is ahead of us, although the two of us have retained our Enchantix powers, and Flora has acquired additional powers. I will follow her lead for this "loop", as she no doubt knows it better than I do. Still, I do have a number of personal projects I would like to continue from the last three years. I suppose I now have an infinite amount of time in which to achieve my goals.

I wonder if that makes them easier, or merely insignificant.

Loop Two

I can now confirm that Flora was telling the truth. Time has looped back on itself for a second time, and once again only Flora and myself are aware of it. According to Flora it has been three loops since the last one I was "Awake" for. I have no way of confirming this, but she has given me no reason not to believe her.

Judging by her excitement at seeing me again, she is very lonely. It is also seems likely that she is quite bored, although that is merely speculation on my part.

One thing that bothers me is that I do not know what this "Baseline" Flora mentioned is. From what she has said, the Baseline is what would occur if neither of us were "Awake", although such an event is unlikely given that if Flora were not present the loop would not occur, assuming the explanation she has given me is correct. It would also be impossible to observe such an event by its very nature. Still, I would very much like to somehow learn what transpired in this "Baseline".

Loop Twenty Seven

This loop is a strange one. Flora calls this a "Hub" loop. It has many similarities to Bloom's homeworld, and even goes by the same name, but there are a number of differences. Still, it has provided me with an opportunity to learn more about Baseline, albeit in a limited form. I am curious as to why the later "seasons" are not part of our loop yet. According to Flora this may change, and I am also curious as to how this would occur.

Flora has number of differences from the character I saw in the show. She is more self-assured, more capable, and less reliant on the help of others. This is logical, given the centuries she has lived through.

I wonder how these loops will change me. I wonder how much I have already changed.

Loop... I have forgotten how many loops I have experienced. Several hundred.

Looping is no longer strange to me. Flora and I may be the only ones who experience it, but it has become natural to me. Its effect on our

powers is remarkable. Flora has proven herself to be the equal of the Dragon Fire. True, the Trix are hardly the most experienced wielders of its power, and they did not possess its full strength, but it is still a remarkable achievement.

I am not amused by this loop. I am not male, and this body is distracting. Still, I imagine I will become used to it over time, but for now it is rather annoying.

Flora continues to confuse me. She is Flynn. She is not Flynn. I am uncertain how to feel about this. I do not find Flora attractive the same way I found Flynn, but she has his personality and knowledge. I am conflicted.

I have experienced my first fused loop. It was an interesting experience, and offered several new opportunities, as well as the chance to obtain objective confirmation of Flora's claims. I believed her, but now I have more to go on than just her word. It is reassuring to know that there are others out there going through the same experience we are.

Creating my own Morpher was an interesting experience. It is a rather bizarre fusion of magic and technology that seems highly impractical, yet at the same time its effectiveness cannot be questioned. I will have to explore the possibilities presented by this.

Musa has Awoken, rather gracelessly. It is nice to have more than merely myself and Flora who remember these loops. She is rather tactless however. Flora and I are not dating. At least, I do not believe we are dating, although I would not be opposed to dating Flynn once again. The fact that they are the same person however does complicate the issue, but I do not feel comfortable with the idea of dating Flora.

Now that Musa is Awake, I imagine things will be different. Flora and I were in many ways driven together by our shared circumstances. Now that we are not alone, that connection will not be as strong. That is a relief, but at the same time I am strangely disappointed. It is illogical.

Flora was Flynn again this loop. Although I don't think it's the wisest course of action, we have resumed our relationship. It is unwise. It is illogical. I cannot bring myself to care about either of these things. Emotions are never logical. I will enjoy this loop, and I will enjoy being with Flynn again for as long as this loop lasts.

I have discovered that I am not at all bothered by being with Flora when we are both male. I quite enjoyed it actually. Flora did as well.

I feel guilty. Flora clearly enjoys having a relationship with me, regardless of my physical form, but I am unwilling to maintain our relationship while she is female, which is most of the time. She never complains, but it is not fair to her, especially with the loops she experiences while I am not Awake.

I enjoy being with Flynn. If someone asked me what I liked the most about him, I would say it was his mind, and his personality. These things are the same regardless of whether he is Flynn or Flora. Is the physical body so important to me? The thought that it might be is distasteful.

I need to get past this. If I want to maintain a relationship with Flora at all, I owe it to her to overcome this. I owe it to myself as well. I love her when she's Flynn. I'd like to be able to love her when she's Flora as well.

I am still feeling a lingering sense of discomfort, but I feel like I have made the right decision with regards to Flora. It is somewhat strange, and occasionally I still feel confused and uncomfortable, but

these feelings are starting to recede. I very much enjoy not having to put my relationship with her on hold most of the time, and being able to be with her like this is slowly becoming more and more natural. Hopefully I will someday completely overcome these lingering anxieties, but for now, I am content.

It is strange. The thing that has the least to do with my baseline self is the thing that lets me continue to define myself without becoming a static and unchanging individual. Perhaps that is logical. I find I do not care about whether it is logical or not, however. I have found that I have begun to care less and less about what is and isn't logical in general. I have found myself more receptive to intuition and instinct of late. I am uncertain as to precisely what is causing this, but I have not found it to be harmful to myself. It is a rather interesting experience.

Flora has dubbed this loop a "Mini-Me" loop. It is a strange one, although it has provided me with the opportunity to observe my baseline self. She is... not like me. There are of course similarities, and I can see how she is someone I used to be, but at the same time, she is not me. She is far more introverted, and has a very hard time reaching out to others. She is more logical than I am. Perhaps too logical, as her insistence on putting things in terms of numbers and facts has denied her a number of opportunities that have presented themselves to her. There are times it is difficult to refrain from letting her know how foolish she is being, but to do so would be to eliminate my chance to observe her. I feel that by observing her I may learn more about myself. This may be an error on my part, but I will not know until the loop is over.

Flora's non-looping self is rather similar to her looping self, although she has less experience and confidence. I have experienced a rather curious, but easily explainable, phenomenon while observing her. When I look at the looping Flora, I feel happy that she is there. When I look at the non-looping Flora, I feel nothing. I can accept this.

Musa's non-looping self is similar to her looping self, if somewhat less adventurous and significantly more angry.

It is interesting to see how the loops have changed us.

Flora's new speech pattern is very annoying. Also, I am taking that abomination of a firearm and destroying it. I accept that Flora finds guns to be guilty pleasure of hers, but I am not going to allow her to use something that is so obviously unsafe.

Hopefully the speech pattern will go away in a few loops.

Bloom is now Awake as well. I am sad that I missed her first loop, but I am rather glad to have another of my friends looping. It was starting to get lonely with just Flora, Musa, and myself Awake. It is unfortunate that Bloom is having such a hard time adapting to the loops, but she should come around eventually.

We are back in the Hub this loop, this time with Musa and Bloom. Their responses to the show were interesting and entertaining. Originally we had intended to spend the loop together, but we've drifted apart. Musa is traveling the world to study music, and Bloom is well on her way to becoming a renowned artist, mostly with her drawings of landscapes and buildings. Unfortunately her work also requires her to travel frequently, as she constantly seeks out new things to draw and paint.

Flora and I, however, have stayed together. Very close together in fact. We live together, and I can see the building she works in from my office. There seems to be something special about this loop though. I cannot define what it is, but it is there. I asked Flora about it, and she agreed, but she doesn't know what it is either. I do think she's keeping a secret from me, but I'm fairly certain it's harmless, judging by the way she's behaving. If it makes her happy, I'm happy.

I have started work on my own Zords. I am somewhat disappointed in myself that it has taken this long for me to get around to resolving this particular deficit in my ranger powers. Still, I have the designs ready and I can start work on them very soon. It is fortunate that our home loop has an abundance of suitable power sources. This will be a major project that will probably consume many loops to complete, but the results should be worth it.

Flora has taken a last name from someone from another loop. I am alarmed by the fact that I cannot remember my own last name, but I am glad that Flora has found a name she likes. Flora Victoria. I think I like it too.

It might be a good idea for me to find a replacement for my own last name, at least until such time as I am able to remember it. I was Techna Xenia in the recent Hub loop. Xenia is a possibility, but I am not certain I like it. I will have to consider it.

I have learned why the other seasons of our hub backup are not part of our loop. It is a disturbing revelation to learn that one's reality has been damaged. Hopefully Fand will be able to repair it, although her behavior does not fill me with confidence. Still, she is our only hope and she did resolve the issue with Relix. I suppose all we can do is wait. After all, we aren't Admins.

Flora can be so... infuriating at times. She was ready to let those townspeople burn her at the stake, just to avoid scaring them. I can't believe she'd do something so stupid. No, I can believe it. She's so selfless and careful about not harming others that it drives me crazy at times. I guess that's one of the reasons I love as much as I do. Honestly sometimes I wish she'd be a little more assertive, but she's too considerate to ever do anything like that!

Nevermind. I think I'm being bothered by something that looper Zoe said. I love Flora, and she loves me, but there's always been this

unspoken distance between us. Certain lines we never cross because we're afraid it might hurt our relationship if we did. I'm not certain those lines are still a good thing. I feel like our relationship has established itself well enough to handle almost anything. I don't want to push too hard, but I'd like for some of those barriers to come down. I will have to consider it.

Techna stared at the next blank page of her journal as she sat up slightly in bed. She had a digital version of it too, but some things were best left to paper. She stared at the page for another moment, her pen hovering over it as she searched for the words to put her thoughts on paper.

She glanced to her right where Flora was sleeping quietly beside her, the sound of her breathing a tempting lullaby. Techna had certainly done more than just consider bringing those barriers down. If her memory was correct, which she wasn't at all sure of, Flora still had her left sock on under the blanket. She certainly wasn't wearing anything else at this point however, and Techna was in a similar state of dress.

She looked back at her journal and tried to put her thoughts into words, with no success. She didn't know how long she'd been staring at the paper when Flora rolled over and opened her eyes.

"Techna?" Flora asked sleepily. "What are you doing?"

"...nothing," Techna said. "Nothing important." She placed her journal and the pen back in her Pocket. She lay back and curled her arms around Flora. "Nothing at all."

The two fairies drifted off to sleep in each other's arms.

Author's Notes:

7.1: Odds are the Trix are responsible for those nanobots. I'm not sure how, but it was probably them.

7.2: Loops aren't always written in chronological order. If I had to guess, I'd say this loop takes place before loop 6.6.

7.3: I think Flora is River. I have no idea where Simon is though. This is a fused Firefly loop by the way.

7.4: Bloom's first Fused loop! Complete with ironic out-of-loop power!

7.5: Visitors from the world of Gundam SEED!

7.6: Some visitors are more welcome than others. Lupin the Third? Not so welcome.

7.7: I don't *think* Techna's actually going to build that. Tony Stark might though, if the idea hits him. I'm not sure if he should meet the Winx as soon as possible, or never.

7.8: Rocky Horror Picture Show. 'Nuff said.

7.9: Oh the irony! Oh the humiliation! Oh the hilarity!

7.10: This was inevitable.

7.11: Uh... Five Nights at Freddy's just got weird. Er. Weirder.

7.12: Oh Musa, you poor, poor thing.

7.13: Well, a bit of a recap and- Oh. Well that was a thing.

Chapter 8

8.1 (Awesomedude17)

Bloom had had a relatively solid set of loops recently, and was feeling calm.

But then came a loop that even she was appalled at.

If there was any consolation for her, it was that Leah was very sympathetic and told her a few tips about surviving loops like this.

Now it was a bar loop, and she sat down on a stool, drinking various types of alcohol, finding that one drink to call her 'get drunk 'drink.

~Rough loop?~

Bloom turned to see... An animatronic rabbit.

"Uh, yes." Bloom looked down into her drink.

~At least you can get drunk.~

"Look, Techna's over there, you talk to her."

~After a loop with a glitched up goat and then finding out about some pictures that this Techna took of us, I'd say no.~

Bloom glared at the animatronic.

"Who are you?"

~Bonnie the Bunny.~

Bloom scoffed.

~And you? It's common courtesy.~

"Bloom." Bloom downed her drink.

~Any reason you're so angry?~

"Ever heard of Twilight?"

~Uuugh! Say no more! That's worse than becoming the other gender!~

"Wait, you hate those loops too?"

~Yeah. It's very annoying since I'm, you know. It's the loops where I'm a human, or something close that's the worst for that to happen.~

"I know. When I became a man, I just... Hated it." Bloom looked at Bonnie, who nodded back. "Take a seat, let's talk."

"How do you like the noodles?" Avatar Korra asked.

"They're very tasty," Techna said. "A bit salty, but I like them."

"I found Water Tribe food to be an acquired taste," Asami said.

"I can see why," Flora said, frowning at her sea prunes.

"So, Techna," Korra said. "Are you sure you don't want formal Firebending instruction? It's a lot of fun."

"I'm certain," Techna said. "I have my own ideas on how to use it in any case."

"Oh?" Asami asked. "Like what?"

Techna raised two fingers and a bright white flame appeared at the tip. "Welding torch," Techna said with a smile. "It should make repairing my Zords easier."

"Repairing?" Flora asked. "You mean you've finished them?"

"I have," Techna said, banishing the flame. "The last step was programming the Zords and modifying my Morpher to work with them, but I finished that up in the last loop. They're ready to go."

"Nice," Asami said. "How are the two of you liking Republic City?"

"The Spirit Wilds are amazing," Flora said. "I've never felt such vibrant plant life before."

"It's interesting to see how bending has influenced technology," Techna said. "The technology *is* somewhat primitive, but it's fascinating."

"Yes, I know we're not the highest tech loop out there," Asami said. "Why don't you come by my workshop sometime. I'll show you some of what I'm really working on."

"I'd love to," Techna said.

"I'd like to visit the Spirit World," Flora said. "It sounds like a very interesting place."

"That's a little harder right now," Korra said. "At the moment you'd have to go to one of the poles to physically enter the Spirit World, and the Republic City portal won't be created for another year or so."

"Then we can do Asami's workshop first," Flora said, cuddling up to her girlfriend.

"You two are adorable together," Asami said. "Are you sure you're not a couple in baseline?"

"We're sure," Techna said, putting her arm around Flora's shoulders. "However, given the damage our loop has suffered, I suppose we could be wrong."

"I kind of like us not being a baseline couple," Flora said. "It reminds me how much I've grown over the loops."

"That's a good point," Korra said. "It's easy to get stuck in patterns in the loops."

"I like our pattern," Asami said, placing her hand on Korra's.

"Some patterns are good!" Korra hastily amended, a stricken look on her face. There was a brief moment as Flora and Techna observed Korra's face, then the entire table burst into laughter.

"So, Techna," Asami said, once the laughter died down. "You've finished your Zords?"

"Yes," Techna said. "All they really need at this point is a test drive."

"How would you like to test out your Megazord against another giant robot?" Asami asked.

"You have those in this loop?" Techna asked, skeptical.

"Just the one," Korra said. "Don't forget to get a picture of Kuvira's face while you're at it."

"I think that can be arranged," Asami said.

"Are you ready?" Flora asked, glancing at Kuvira's giant machine.

"Ready to go," Techna said. "I've been looking forward to this."

"We'll back you up if necessary," Flora said. "See you when the fight's over." She raced back to the other loopers.

"Techno Storm, Ranger Form," Techna said, activating her Morpher. The familiar purple spandex covered her body. The helmet closed over her head. The new HUD in her faceplate came to life. "Activate all Zords."

"Techno Zord, Land, confirming activation," the onboard AI of Techna's first Zord responded. It burst from her pocket, looking like

nothing so much as a weaponized bullet train on tank treads.

"Techno Zord, Sea, confirming activation," the second Zord announced. A submarine left her pocket and landed in the harbor.

"Techno Zord, Sky, confirming activation." A fighter plane exited Techna's pocket and roared into the sky.

"Techno Zord, Space, confirming activation." A space shuttle appeared.

"Form Techno Megazord," Techna said. "Battle mode."

The shuttle rose up, the nose pointing towards the ground. The submarine and bullet train rushed towards it, each splitting down the middle. The bullet train formed two arms and the shuttle's wings folded in to form the Megazord's shoulders. The submarine connected to the front of the shuttle, now the bottom of the Megazord, and formed a pair of legs. The fighter jet roared in and clamped to the bottom of the shuttle, now the back of the Megazord. The wings extended out past the shoulders while the cockpit folded forwards to form the Megazord's head. Techna sat in the pilot's seat and flexed her fingers, then settled her hands on the controls. This was going to be fun.

Kuvira's mech hesitated, then raised its massive cannon.

"Techno Cannon, activate," Techna said. The Megazord's right arm reformed itself into a cannon. "Fire." A blast of green energy fired out of the Megazord's arm, destroying Kuvira's cannon. "Return to battle mode." The Megazord's arm returned to normal.

Kuvira was clearly not pleased by this turn of events. Her now weapon-less robot moved forward at its best speed, trying to physically overpower Techna's Megazord.

"Wing Blades," Techna said. The wings on the Megazord's back folded out into a pair of swords that slotted into the Megazord's

hands. Techna shifted her controls and her Megazord dropped into a combat stance.

Kuvira's machine never stood a chance.

8.3 (lord Martiya)

Miss Magix was a rather unusual beauty contest. One where the talent show part was actively sabotaged by members of the staff. And Icy was the official saboteur two years running, this years with help from her sisters.

Here came an unexpected contestant. Not for her looks, but because nobody who knew her would expect AISHA to enter a beauty contest. It was a dare from Zing, of course. A dare that included her not to dance but to show off her (remarkable) boxing skills. And like every Loop, she asked for volunteers... With Icy and Stormy having to put their fists in their mouths to stop the laughter when Darcy cast her superstrength spell and volunteered.

"Don't worry, I'll stop before hitting you." Aisha told the witch.

Aisha punched, Darcy dodged and punched back to send her through a wall... And this time Aisha sent HER flying with a Judo throw.

And Bloom laughed. It took her three loops learning Judo and two days talking to Andros' princess before she agreed to learn, but the look on the Trix' faces was well worth it.

Especially because Stella won anyway, so Bloom didn't have to suffer through her rants as had happened that Loop that Darcy decided to try it...

8.4

Commander Shepard sat across a table from one his old students and sipped his Ryncol. "So, I take it your last loop was a good one?" he asked.

"It was excellent," Flora said, leaning back in her chair with her own drink, a sweet, bubbly concoction she'd taken a fondness to after a loop where Linfea was one massive vineyard. "You know how Alfea's full name is 'The Alfea College for Fairies'?"

"Yes, although I remember it being more like a boarding high school," Shepard said.

"I know," Flora said. "Well, this last loop, it decided to live up to the name. The rooms were a bit smaller, but that's easy to fix with magic. The classes were better and even included some things I never knew about fairy magic, which was a surprise. There was so much more to do than usual, too. Bloom decided to join the choir, Musa was an RA, and Techna joined the swimming team."

"And what did you do?" Shepard asked.

"I decided to try programming," Flora said, taking a sip of her drink. "Techna said that my early attempts were only the fourth worst example of code she'd ever seen."

"The fourth?" Shepard asked.

"The second and third were deliberately created as examples of how not to code," Flora said with a smile. "The worst was that thing Twilight carries around to deal with rogue AIs."

"Ouch," Shepard said, smiling back at the girl he'd introduced to the loops. "I take it you got better?"

"Oh yes," Flora said, her smile never faltering. "Now my work is only the twelfth worst example of coding she's ever seen."

Shepard considered for a moment. "...the eight spaces you've jumped, they're previous projects of yours, aren't they?"

"Yes," Flora said, grinning. "Still, improvement!"

"Sweetie," Shepard said, borrowing a word from Flora's usual vocabulary. "I really don't think programming is your thing."

"I'm certain it's not my thing," Flora said. "That doesn't mean it wasn't fun."

"...right," Shepard said, shaking his head. "Just so we're clear, if you try to do any programming on the Normandy and Tali kills you in your sleep, I'm not responsible. Are we clear?"

"Crystal, sir," Flora said.

"Good," Shepard said, putting his empty glass down and getting to his feet. "Now, let's see about teaching you to handle a rocket launcher."

8.5

"Heh-hem!" Griselda coughed, advancing on the suddenly cornered young fairies. "Do you have any idea what time it is?"

The five young fairies, "Varanda", Stella, Musa, Techna, and Aisha froze like deer in the headlights. Flora stepped forwards. "Thank you miss Griselda," Alfea's headmistress said. "I believe I can handle this from here. If you would resolve that issue with our attendance record, I would very much appreciate it."

"Of course, Headmistress," Griselda said, giving the red-haired fairy a sharp look before returning to the faculty building.

"Now, girls," Flora said. "Part of my job is keeping you safe. It becomes much harder for me to do that if you aren't back by curfew.

Please keep that in mind the next time you're out in Magix, will you?"

"Yes Miss Flora!" the girls chorused.

"Very good," Flora said. "Now, before I let you return to your room, there is one more thing I would like to address." She turned to the red-haired girl in front of her. "Miss Bloom, why did you feel the need to tell us you were Princess Varanda of Callisto?"

The fairies gasped in unison. "You knew?" Stella asked, shocked.

"Of course I did," Flora said. "Bloom?"

"I, my name wasn't on the list," Bloom said weakly.

"And you believed you needed to be on the list to be accepted into my school?" Flora prodded gently.

"...Yes?" Bloom said weakly.

Flora gave her trademark gentle smile. "The list is a tool to let us know which students are not here," Flora said. "It is not something we use to deny students access to our facilities. You may remain at Alfea, although I ask that, in the future, you tell me the truth."

"Thank you!" Bloom said. "I've always wanted to be a fairy!"

"You always have been my dear," Flora said. "Now run along you five. You have a busy day tomorrow, and you'll need your sleep."

"Yes Headmistress!" the five fairies chorused before hurrying off to their room.

Flora smiled as she watched them rush into their building. This loop was already an old one, beginning some twenty years earlier. It was a long time to wait, but it had proved interesting replacing Miss Faragonda. Flora turned and started towards her office. Being Alfea's Headmistress was both interesting and challenging. Idly, she wondered where Faragonda was. Aisha had clearly replaced her this

loop, but who had replaced Aisha? She would have to look into it. In the meantime, she needed to submit that updated registry of students Griselda had no doubt prepared for her to the Magix central database. She would also need to look over the student registries for Cloud Tower and Red Fountain, but that could wait until tomorrow.

Flora entered her office and sat down in her comfortable chair. Her desk was mostly free of clutter, save for the crystal ball she used to communicate with the other schools' heads, a flower pot with some flowers from Linphea, and a digital picture frame with pictures from across various loops. As she watched, the picture changed from Commander Shepard's female form to a picture of Techna in her Enchantix form.

Flora smiled again. She would see Techna again soon enough. She pressed a hidden button in her desk that caused a computer to fold out from its concealed compartment in her desk. She had work to do.

8.6 (lord Martiya)

"HOW DARE YOU!" Bloom shouted. "KIDNAPPING FOUR MOTHER DRAGONS AND ENDANGERING THEM AND THEIR EGGS JUST TO WATCH FOUR KIDS NOT EVEN OUT OF SCHOOL RISKING THEIR LIVES AGAINST THEM!"

"But-" Dumbledore tried to speak, but a fireball made him change his mind.

"Now, give me a reason why I shouldn't burn all of you but the Champions, either for doing this or for complicity for not boycotting this depravity."

"Now you see here, lizar-" Karkaroff's rant was interrupted when Bloom incinerated him.

"You have one minute to make your one try," Bloom warned.

Dumbledore started thinking. FAST. But before he could come up with anything, Crouch stated it was a tradition, and Bloom managed to burn the judges, the dragon handlers and half of the public before Harry restrained her.

"LET ME GO! THOSE BARBARIANS DESERVE TO DIE!" she cried out. "THEM AND THE EGG-KILLER!"

Harry put her to sleep, wondering how to deal with the powerful dragon fairy turned overpowered actual dragon without using lethal force. After all, she was right...

8.7 (lord Martiya)

It was a bar Loop, and Flora was enjoying a light drink when Kiko bounced on the table.

"What? Since when are you Looping?" Flora asked him, surprised.

Then Kiko shed his skin and revealed Kyubey.

"Since before you." the little critter replied. "And before you ask how I did it… You never paid that much attention to the little rabbit, did you? All I had to do was to make sure your non-Awake friend Bloom remembered the rabbit as her pet instead of me, and everyone else would not even suspect.

"Please put down your weapons, I need to talk with miss Flora and miss Carmen Sandiego to avoid a disaster."

The various Loopers, both the ones who were about to attack Kyubey and the ones who weren't, couldn't help but laugh. A lot. After a while, Flora recovered enough to let Kyubey speak.

"Contrary to my reputation, I do not enjoy spreading destruction. In fact, my ultimate goal is the opposite: the eternal life of all universes by defeating entropy." the wish-granting MLE said. "That is why I

observe the phenomena of all universes searching for a suitable energy source and other elements, with my last Loop being dedicated to examine the power of the Great Dragon incarnated in Bloom."

"And?" Flora asked him.

"And that power proved too dangerous to be harnessed. I will continue my observations at the first occasion, but keep anyone dangerous away from Bloom." the too-cute being warned as he produced a dossier. "This is a copy of my notes so far. I may be wrong, but I doubt it, and with such a power I prefer to be overly cautious-I've already destroyed a universe by not being so."

"Interesting." Carmen Sandiego said as she appeared behind the critter. "And what would be the warning you need to give me?"

"Flora's universe includes three non-Loopers called the Trix sisters. They have control over ice and cold, storm and lightning, and a wide array of darkness-associated powers respectively, and their personal names are Icy, Stormy and Darcy. And as Flora can confirm, they're also skilled thieves, who have stolen a power that is flat-out impossible to steal."

"So, punny names, capable thieves… Seem like good minions to me."

"That is exactly the problem: they must NOT acquire the thieving skills typical of your crew, not now that they're not Looping nor if and when they start Loop."

"Why?"

"Flora, please, try and imagine the Trix with the skills to steal rivers, concepts and-"

Flora's scream of undiluted terror interrupted Kyubey.

"This is why." he said.

Flora Awoke and sent out her usual Ping. Last loop had featured an Awake Bloom and Musa, but unfortunately no Techna. Hopefully she would get to see her girlfriend again this loop.

Flora was expecting no more than three Pings in response to her own. She staggered backwards to her bed when no fewer than sixteen Pings went out in response to hers. She sat on her bed in stunned confusion. *Sixteen loopers?* What was going on?

"Flora!" Techna said, bursting into Flora's room. "Did you-"

"Yeah, I got it," Flora said weakly. "Well, you're Awake, that's one down."

Bloom pushed in, Stella behind her. "What's going on?" she asked.

"Are you asking about why Techna is in the room?" Flora asked. "Or something else?"

"Flora, I'm Awake," Bloom said.

"Oh good," Flora said. "Hi Stella."

"How do you know my name?" Stella asked.

"It's a long story," Musa said as she walked through the door. "We're all Awake this loop?"

"You, me, Bloom, and of course Flora," Techna said. "That leaves thirteen loopers unaccounted for."

"You know Bloom's name?" Stella asked. "What's a loop? What are loopers? What's Awake mean? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!"

The four loopers shared an awkward look.

"Flora, Techna, do you want to explain this?" Musa asked.

"Sure," Flora said. "I'm the Anchor, I should do it."

"And Techna has the slideshow," Bloom said. "Musa and I will try to find the other loopers."

"Alright," Techna said. "Good luck."

"So, Stella," Flora said. "You might want to sit down for this..."

Bloom wandered around Alfea, looking for anyone she didn't recognize. Musa was doing the same over at Cloud Tower. Somehow she'd figured out how to use her magic to disguise herself as male. Bloom had a hard time understanding why Musa or anyone else would ever *want* to do that, but she apparently did. Oh well, it was useful for certain situations. She suddenly felt a tap on her shoulder and spun.

"Elsa?" Bloom asked.

"Yes, it's me," the Snow Queen said with a smile. "This is your home loop?"

"Yes," Bloom said. "Uh, we don't usually have very many loopers here, so we're trying to figure out who our guests are."

"Well I'm one," Elsa said. "My sister is two, Cinderella is three, Snow White is four, Aurora makes five, Ariel is six, Belle is seven, Jasmine is eight, Pocahontas is nine, Mulan is ten, Tiana is eleven, Rapunzel is twelve, and Merida makes thirteen. You're fourteen and the other three-"

"Are local," Bloom said. "How do you know who all these loopers are?"

"Well they're standing right there," Elsa said, pointing at the twelve young women standing in Alfea's quad.

"I think I get it," Stella said. "So, odds are I'll never remember this?"

"Unfortunately yes," Flora said. "We're hoping you Awaken some time soon though."

"Flora!" Bloom said, bursting into the the room. "I found the other loopers."

"Wonderful," Flora said. "Who is it?"

"All thirteen princesses of the Disney cluster," Bloom said.

"Well," Flora said. "It could be worse."

" *Thirteen* princesses?" Stella asked.

"Technically it's eleven princesses, one queen, and one person who isn't royalty at all," Techna supplied. "However, they're typically called the Disney Princesses as a group."

"But... but..." Stella sputtered.

"What is it Stella?" Flora asked.

"This school isn't fit for this much royalty!" Stella announced.

The three loopers present blinked.

"What?" Techna asked.

"It's far too drab!" Stella said. "And if they're visiting like you say, we need to make sure we give a good impression, right?"

"Well I suppose..." Flora said, somewhat bemused by Stella's ability to take this entirely in stride.

"EXACTLY!" Stella declared. "Don't worry, I'll have this place ready for royalty in no time!" She rushed off.

"I'm not certain whether I should by glad she's taken it this well, or concerned about what she might do," Bloom said.

"That is a very good question," Techna said.

"I can't believe Stella set all of this up!" Musa said as she looked around Alfea's ballroom. "I've seen loops where entire teams of fairies couldn't achieve half of this."

"It is rather remarkable," Techna said. "She did all of the work for getting the dance organized, and yet she somehow not only maintained but actually exceeded the usual standard quality for this event."

"Are you sure she's not a looper?" Tiana asked.

"Positive," Flora said. "She's just... enthusiastic."

"Clearly," Mulan said.

"We should thank her for doing all of this for us," Snow White said.

"Our guests really appreciate everything you did for them," Flora said, sitting next to an exhausted Stella.

"Oh, it was... nothing," Stella said, her eyelids drifting slightly down.

"No, Stella, really," Flora said. "You did a lot of work, just for our guests. They're really impressed by it. Thank you for doing this."

"It was nothing," Stella insisted sleepily.

"You should go to bed," Flora said.

"No, I'm a host," Stella said. "I can't go yet."

"Bloom and Musa can handle it," Flora said. "You need to get some sleep."

"Are you certain I'm not needed?" Stella asked, then she yawned.

"Yes," Flora said. "I'm certain. Go to bed."

"Okay, I'll-" Stella abruptly slumped forward in her chair and started snoring lightly.

Flora smiled and shook her head. Stella had done a truly inhuman amount of work over the last few weeks with nothing but her magic. Flora couldn't help but admire her non-looping friend's drive and dedication.

"She fell asleep in her chair?" Techna asked, breaking free from the crowd.

"She did," Flora said, standing to give Techna a kiss. "She's been a big help."

"I know," Techna said. She looked at the sleeping girl. "Are we going to leave her there?"

"No, I'm going to take her back to her room and put her in her bed," Flora said. "Could you let Bloom and Musa know that I'll be back soon?"

"Of course," Techna said, stealing a quick kiss of her own from Flora. "We can handle it."

"Good," Flora said. She slid her hands under Stella's sleeping form and called on her vampire side to give her the strength to lift the taller girl.

"When you get back, you owe me a dance," Techna said.

"I'll be there," Flora said. She made her way out of the hall, a sleeping Stella in her arms.

"Flora?" Stella asked sleepily as Flora tucked her into her bed.

"Yes Stella, it's me," Flora said. "Everything's fine, go back to sleep."

"You sure?" Stella asked.

"I'm sure," Flora said, brushing some hair out of Stella's face. "Get some sleep. You've earned it." Flora started humming a lullaby.

Stella's eyes closed and she slowly settled into her bed, sleep stealing over her.

"Good night, Stella," Flora said. "Start looping soon." She turned the light off and made her way back down to the ballroom for that dance.

8.9 (lord Martiya)

Bloom had enough. Whenever she wasn't Awake, Musa would always have an incredibly rocky love story with Riven, and Amore just couldn't help her two stubborn friends. No, it was time to get PROFESSIONAL help. And she remembered from one of Diaspro's rants in the past loops there was a relationship consultant on Magix, a good one.

"Bloom, this is a REALLY bad idea." Riven said after removing his gag in spite of being tied-up. He was better at that than Musa.

"Nonsense! I've had enough of your fights, and with Darkar doing his thing I don't need you to complicate it by ruining my hearing." Bloom replied as she reapplied the gag.

Bloom dragged her friends in the office of the relationship consultant, and saluted: "Good morning, maam, I'm Peters, Bloom Peters, the

one who called you yesterday and these are-" At that point she noticed who was at the consultant's desk. "DARCY?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!"

"I'm the relationship consultant." Darcy replied deadpan. "I suppose you gagged Riven before he could tell you."

"Five times..."

Bloom left before Darcy could decide if ruining her office was worth trying to kill her.

Flora Awoke and sent out a ping as usual. Three responses. Well, that was nice. The last time all four of them had been awake at the same time was the loop with all the princesses. She was rather glad it was just the four of them this time. Yes, she liked some of the princesses quite a bit, but having three times as many foreign loopers as native loopers was a bit much. The four of them could use some time together without any guests to worry about.

Flora gave a small yawn and made her way towards the door. She'd been just about to go to bed when the last loop ended a few hours early, and she was still sleepy. Mental fatigue, she supposed, as opposed to physical. She would take a nap once everyone was gathered together. Speaking of which, where was Bloom?

Flora poked her head out the door to see where Bloom was. Ah! There she was, she was just a little late. And she was smiling wide enough that Flora was seriously questioning how it didn't hurt her face. "Bloom?" Flora asked. "What's up?"

"Oh, nothing much," Bloom said. "You should see it for yourself though, rather than me telling you."

"Judging by your expression, I take it this is a positive development?" Techna asked, walking down the hall, her suitcase in tow.

"Oh yes," Bloom said. "But you should see it for yourselves. Where's Musa?"

"Right here," the fairy of Music said, coming around the corner. "What do you want to show us? And where's Stella?"

"In her room," Bloom said. "Come on, let's go."

The other three fairies shared a shrug, then followed Bloom to Stella's room. Bloom opened the door and the fairies trooped in.

At the sound of the door opening, Stella turned away from her unpacking. She caught sight of the girls and a grin broke out on her face. "Hey Flora, Techna, Musa, guess what? I remember! That thing with the princesses! I remember it all!"

There was a moment of stunned silence. Then Bloom spoke. "Told you it was good."

"You could have just told us," Musa said.

"We can discuss Bloom's behavior at a later point," Techna said. "At the moment we have a far more important topic at hand."

"You're right, Techna," Flora said. She walked over to the blonde fairy. "Welcome to the loops, Stella." She hugged her friend. At last the five of them were reunited in the loops.

Author's Notes:

8.1: "And the Cullens burned, burned, burned, and Bloom's the one who did it! The Cullens burned, burned, burned, while Bella ran and cried!"

8.2: The Technozords are finally complete! Giant robot ahoy!

8.3: Some early Aisha for those who've been missing her. Don't worry, she'll start looping soon.

8.4: College really is better than high school. It really is.

8.5: Headmistress Flora!

8.6: Uh, Do Not Taunt the Happy Fun Mama Dragon Bloom?

8.7: That is a rather scary thought. Yeah, let's not do that. Also, let the Dragon Fire arc begin!

8.8: When motivated, Stella is downright scary.

8.9: This has been a recurring joke over on Spacebattles. Personally, I don't think Darcy would make a very good therapist, but it is an amusing thought.

8.10: Welcome to the loops, Stella!

Chapter 9

9.1

The other Winx had told Stella about Fused Loops. They sounded very interesting, and a lot of fun. So far however, she was less than impressed with her first such loop. It was just... high school. And not even interesting school like Alfea, no, just... school. Worse, there was that creepy sparkly guy in the corner who kept staring at her. Always at her. It was starting to wear on her nerves, leaving her twitchy and constantly expecting trouble.

Worse, she hadn't managed to make contact with the local Anchor yet. She'd sent out a Ping and gotten one in response, but she still couldn't find the Anchor. She was starting to think it would take something dramatic like turning into her Enchantix form in the middle of lunch to get the Anchor's attention.

The last bell of the school day rang and Stella gather up her things to start her walk home. Her in-loop father had offered to drive her, but Stella had declined. After spending so much time cooped up in that school she needed some time to herself.

And she would have had it too, had that creepy guy not decided to follow her. Again. What was his deal? She spun to where she had seen him just a moment ago out of the corner of her eye. "Stop following me, you creepy stalker bishie!" Stella shouted, then turned back to continue her walk. She then realized he was standing not five feet in front of her.

After a week of dealing with said stalking, Stella's nerves were almost gone, and her sense of paranoia had become very overdeveloped. So she can be forgiven for her immediate response to the sudden invasion of her personal space by her current least favorite person in the world.

She raised her hands in an instinctive defensive gesture and her magic responded to her frayed emotional state by blasting out of her hands. An almighty golden glow reached out for the man and enveloped him in its power. When it faded, there was nothing but a pile of ashes where he had once stood.

"Wait, no!" Stella said. "I didn't mean to do that! No!"

"If you hadn't killed him, I would have," a voice said from behind her. Stella turned and saw one of the girls from the high school, one her in-loop memories said she hated for some reason, putting some sort of firearm into a hole in the air where it vanished.

"Leah, right?" Stella asked, dredging the name out of her memory. "Uh, why would you have..."

"Because the creepy stalker bishie deserves it," Leah said. "You would not believe how many times I or someone else has killed the creep." She walked over to the ashes and peered at them for a moment. "Well, whaddya know. Apparently sunlight *is* harmful to him when applied in sufficient quantities."

"Uh," Stella said, staring at the girl.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Leah said. "I forgot to properly introduce myself. I'm Leah Clearwater, this loop's unfortunate anchor. And a werewolf, among other things. You must be the looper?"

"Oh, yes," Stella said. "Uh, werewolf? You have those in this loop?"

"Those, and vampires," Leah said, kicking at the ashes to disperse them. "Like the guy you just killed."

"He was a vampire?" Stella asked, surprised.

"Of the most pathetic variety, yes," Leah said. "Why?"

"Well my Anchor's part vampire, and she's nothing like he was."

"What variety of vampire?" Leah asked.

"I think she said it was from Hellsing or something," Stella said.

"Ah, so she's a *real* f*cking vampire."

"Uh..." Stella said, not sure how to deal with this situation.

"Anyways, welcome to my loop," Leah said. "Why don't you come with me and I can tell you what usually goes on around here."

"Oh, thanks," Stella said. "It's my first fused loop, and I'm not sure what to do just yet."

"This is your first fused loop?" Leah asked. "Wow, I don't know which Admin you pissed off, but someone clearly doesn't like you. Oh well, time for that later. Let's get going." The Anchor started walking.

Stella followed.

9.2

"That's right campers! Welcome to TOTAL DRAMA ISLAND!"

Flora looked over at her friends. "Do any of you care about this?"

"No," Techna said.

"Nope," Musa responded.

"Not really," Bloom said.

"Definitely not," Stella said.

"Alright, let's make this a vacation loop then," Flora said.

"You will have to compete to avoid getting voted off the island!" Chris McLean said.

"No, I don't think so," Flora said. "We'll be leaving now."

"But you're contractually obligated!" the game show host said. "And there's no way off without a boat!"

"Girls, Enchantix!" Flora said. One flash of light later and five fairies took to the air.

"But...but...my game show!" McLean wailed as his five most promising contestants vanished into the sky.

9.3 (lord Martiya)

"Darcy, out of curiosity-how are you such a well-known therapist?" Musa asked her (sort of) girlfriend.

"Two reasons. The first is that I'm a skilled manipulator, all I have to do is to focus more on helping people instead of myself and voilà! The best therapist on the planet." Darcy replied.

"And the other?"

"For some reason, I'm the only one with half-decent skills who actually decided to do the job."

"What?!"

"People here rely too much on magic for everything, even for things where magic is worse than useless. Don't tell anyone, but to Earth standard I'm only decent. And as magicless as they are, the Earthlings actually know what they're doing when it comes to psychology."

Musa applied her forehead to the closest wall. Not for the revelation on Darcy's relative lack of skills, but because it explained just too much on the undercurrent of insanity in the Magical Dimension.

9.4

Flora was enjoying this loop so far. Bloom was the only one of their number who wasn't Awake, so Flora, Techna, and Musa had decided to take the opportunity to show Stella how baseline loops worked these days. The whole Bloom/Sky thing had been resolved with a minimum of fanfare, the Trix had been dealt with quite quickly and neatly, and were receiving actual treatment for a change, rather than being stuffed into the Lightrock brainwashing center, and a whole bunch of other minor problems had been cleared up ahead of schedule.

Year two was about to start, and Flora was all set to take the year off. Darkar was, if anything, easier to beat than the Trix, and thanks to Fand he was doomed from the start. All they really had to do was expose the false Professor Avalon and the rest of the year would take care of itself.

So when Aisha awoke and described their enemy as a blonde man with green hearts decorating his outfit, Flora was significantly less than thrilled.

"Oh, bosh'tet," Flora said, earning her a raised eyebrow from Techna. "Dio Brando."

"Oh," Techna said, suddenly making the connection. "Yes, bosh'tet is right."

"What does bosh'tet mean, and who's Dio Brando?" Stella asked.

"Aisha, Bloom," Flora said. "I'm sorry, but we've been hiding something from both of you. Musa, can you explain the loops to them? Techna, you and I need to start work on a plan to deal with Dio."

"Who's Dio?" Stella asked again.

"Come on, we'll explain on the way," Flora said.

"So our primary task is to eliminate any and all possible means of Ascension," Flora said to the assembled Winx. "Thanks to Fand the Ultimate Power of Relix isn't a problem, but that still leaves several possible methods that could be used to gather enough power to Ascend. Techna?"

Techna duly brought up a holographic image of a golden box.

"Our first objective is the destruction of the Agador Box," Flora said. "In and of itself, it does not represent an Ascension risk, but its ability to contain a literally infinite quantity of magic makes it dangerous. Musa, that's your task. Fairy Dust is usually effective, but not always, so be prepared to use other means."

"If all else fails, I can give it the Lost Logia treatment," Musa said. "It probably won't destroy it, but it should prevent anyone from using it."

Flora nodded and Techna changed to another hologram. "Our second problem is two-fold. Both the Dragon Fire and the Water Stars represent Ascension risks in of themselves. Given that our universe is still intact, we can be fairly certain that Dio Brando has not been granted access to the Shadow Fire, which is very fortunate, but that doesn't mean he can't get his hands on one of the other two great powers. The Water Stars are quite simple to resolve as a problem. Once this meeting is over Stella will go to the Golden Kingdom and inform Arcadia of the danger. She and the other primordial magical beings can seal off the Golden Kingdom from our world until the loop ends, putting the Water Stars outside of Brando's reach."

"Couldn't we put me there too?" Bloom asked. "If my Dragon Fire's such a danger, shouldn't I put myself somewhere he can't get to me?"

"No," Flora said. "The Water Stars and the Dragon Fire cannot coexist for any length of time. You and they would destroy each other, and I don't want to find out what that would do to our branch of Yggdrasil. Furthermore, you are an integral part of our world, we can't simply remove you from it. Believe me, we've tried, and it doesn't end well."

"But if I'm putting everyone in danger..." Bloom said.

"You are safest in Alfea," Techna said. "We've spoken to Faragonda about the threat, and she's spoken to both Griffin and Saladin. If Dio comes after you here, he'll face the combined forces of Alfea, Cloud Tower, and Red Fountain. Flora will be in charge of coordinating and leading the defenses."

"Question," Aisha said. "Why Flora?"

"Because I've trained under Commander Shepard," Flora said. "I learned from the best, and I know what I'm doing. As the Anchor, I'm also the most powerful person in the loop, and stand the best chance against Brando in a fight. Furthermore, if all else fails, I can force a loop crash by dying. It won't be pretty, but it will deny Dio the opportunity to take the Dragon Fire."

"Let's hope it doesn't come to that," Techna said. "Our biggest weakness is Dio Brando's ability to stop time. To counter this, I will be working with anyone who has a talent with technology to produce Time Stabilizers. They're originally from the Babylon 5 loops, but with the right adjustments they should be effective against Dio's abilities."

Flora nodded. "Good. We'll need all the advantages we can get. Winx, let's do this."

In Shadowhaunt, Dio Brando sat on his new throne, plotting his newest grab for divinity.

Dio Brando struck within a week. The monsters of Shadowhaunt descended upon Alfea in the early hours of the morning. They were met by stiff resistance from the fairies of Alfea. Magic and monsters clashed on the walls of the school. The forces of Red Fountain arrived swiftly, their aircraft tearing into the horde of monsters with lasers. A portal opened up on Alfea's quad and the witches of Cloud Tower poured out to reinforce the besieged fairies.

The army of Shadowhaunt wavered. Then, the man himself appeared. Dio Brando arrived, his army parting around him. Magic rained down on him, but he brushed it aside and stormed through Alfea's gates, destroying them in the process. His army swarmed in behind him and pressed the attack. With Magix's forces distracted, Dio set off in search of his true objective.

His first obstacle came in the form of the heads of the schools and their assistants. The moment he entered the school itself, Faragonda, Saladin, Griffon, and Griselda cut loose with all their magic. The combined blast struck the MLE and hammered him back through the door he'd just entered through. He hit the stairs and bounced down them to land on the ground outside. He got to his feet, .

"Out of my way!" he shouted, punching the base of the stairs that lead up to Alfea's doors. A shockwave ripped across the school's floor and knocked the teachers from their feet.

Dio advanced.

Codatorta who had managed to keep his footing advanced on Brando with his massive Phanto-blade. He brought the sword's enormous purple blade down in a powerful two-handed strike. Dio Brando caught it and wrenched it out of his hands, then impaled him with his own sword. Cordatorta fell to the ground, slain by his own blade. Dio moved quickly, killing Saladin, Faragonda, and Griffon with his bare hands. Griselda, not as slowed by age as the three

school heads, got off a magical blast, but Dio swatted it aside with one hand. His other hand broke her in half.

The MLE continued towards his goal.

"He's coming," Techna said. "Musa?"

"On it," the Fairy of Music said. "Treble, Bass, set up."

"Techno Storm, Ranger Form!" Techna called out.

"Enchantix!" Stella said.

The combined flash of their transformations filled the room.

Techna drew a humming sword from her belt. "Technoblade, Red Shift." The blade began to glow red and the humming shifted into a higher frequency. "Form Battlegear." Wires burst from her costume and formed into powered armor that covered her body in a layer of techno-mystical steel.

Musa held up her twin pistols. "Treble, Bass, Symphony Mode." The two pistols slotted together, then extended out, forming into a rifle-like weapon. "Load Cartridge. Blaster One." There was a hissing chunk as the devices powered up.

Stella watched. One day she would have her own powers like these. Assuming they could stop Dio.

The doors to the room the three Winx were in burst open and Dio Brando stepped in.

"Where is the Dragon Fire?" he demanded.

"Safe from you," Techna said.

She crouched, her powered armor's muscles whining, then pushed off at the MLE, her feet gouging holes into the marble floor with the force of her launch. She swung the blade at him with all the force her mechanically augmented muscles could provide. Her Technoblade operated on the same principles as vibroblades from the Honor Harrington loops. An actual blade that uses a line of force less than a single atom thick as its edge. Red Shift added a chainsaw-like oscillating effect and temperatures in excess of fifteen hundred degrees Fahrenheit. It cut through the MLE like he wasn't even there.

"Sonic Breaker!" Musa announced. A reddish-purple beam blasted from her combined devices, engulfing Dio Brando in magical energy.

"Solar Blast!" Stella shouted, adding an orb of her own magic, even if she was fairly certain it was nothing but insurance at this point.

Stella was wrong. When the dust cleared, Dio was still standing, the slice through his body sealed. He sported a small scorch mark on his left arm, but that was the extent of his injuries. "Impressive. I actually felt that," he smirked.

"Technoblade, White Shift!" Techna shouted. The sword in her hands shifted from glowing red to glowing white. The humming sound shifted up into frequencies too high to hear. "Battlegear, Overclock!" Her armor began to shine with power and she hurled herself at Dio again, her blade leaving a line of superheated plasma in its wake as she sliced into her opponent. He ignored her, his wounds healing even as she made them. Instead he turned on Stella.

"Die!" His eyes flashed and what looked like a laser struck the young looper, tearing through her body. She fell to the ground, dead.

"STELLA!" Musa shouted. "Symphony, Blaster Three! Load Cartridge! Sonic Breaker!" Four blaster bits appeared in the air around Musa and charged up, then fired. When the smoke cleared, Dio Brando stood in the middle of a massive crater. He was untouched, save for the small scorch mark on his arm.

"So you want to be next!" he said with fell glee. He rushed at Musa and grabbed her by the face. He snarled and ice crept across her body, turning her into a frozen statue. One sweep of Dio's arm shattered her into fragments.

"MUSA!" Techna shouted. She pulled a gun from her belt. She jammed her sword into the back of the gun and folded it over. "Techno Pulse Cannon, Arm!" The combined weapon charged up with a hum. "Fire!" A cascading blast of energy launched itself at the enemy. It struck with a massive explosion that tore apart what was left of the room. But once again, when the dust cleared, Dio Brando stood unharmed, save for that scorch mark on his left arm.

"Nice try," Dio said. "But it's useless, useless, USELESS!"

Techna gasped for breath. She and her friends had thrown everything they had at him, but they'd only inflicted the smallest scratch on him. Before she could recover, he was on her. She tried to dodge, and even managed to evade the punch that would have shattered her helmet and most likely her head as well, but she was too tired to dodge the follow up. Dio Brando put his fist through her chest and out her back. She joined her friends in death.

Flora stood in the Great Hall of Alfea, waiting. Bloom was hidden in the small room behind her with Aisha for company and protection. One non-looping fairy wasn't much against someone like Dio Brando, but it was better than nothing. Hopefully it wouldn't come to that.

She'd heard explosions from both the foyer and the entrance hall, which meant Dio had pushed through the school heads and reached the defensive position her fellow loopers held. From the sound of things, they'd hit him with everything they had. Flora hoped that would be enough. She was afraid it wasn't even close.

Dio proved her right by smashing the doors to the great hall off their hinges. "Where's the Dragon Fire?" he demanded.

Her friends were gone then. She was all that was left. Flora drew a deep breath, then shifted further and deeper into her vampiric side than she'd ever gone before. Her hair billowed out into a wild mane, her eyes turned blood red, and her clothes morphed into a black and twisted mockery of her usual Enchantix outfit. Her power flared out around her in a dark cloud. "You'll get the Dragon Fire over my dead body," Flora said, her voice echoing with hatred.

"If that's what you want, I will be HAPPY to oblige!" Dio said. He rushed forward, swinging his fist at Flora. She raised her own hand to block and the two collided. A visible shockwave ripped out from the impact and tore the hall's furnishings apart. Flora snarled, baring her fangs, and lashed out with her other hand, faster than a bullet. It struck Dio and tore into him, but as soon as she pulled back for a second strike, the wound sealed up. Flora continued to take advantage of the superior speed granted to her to deliver a bone-breaking kick to Dio's chest. She felt his ribcage collapse as her kick hurled him away from her.

He got to his feet and laughed. "Your struggles are POINTLESS!"

Faster than a snake, Flora reached into her Pocket and pulled out the Harkonnen. She sighted in, then fired. The 30mm bullet passed cleanly through Dio's face, leaving it a bloody ruin. Flora could only stare in disbelief as his head reconstructed itself. She shoved the Harkonnen back into her pocket and pulled out her old M-96 Mattock out. She took aim with the rifle and squeezed the trigger. The first gun she'd ever owned worked exactly the way it was supposed to, spitting high-velocity lead slugs at her opponent. The bullets tore into him, but he ignored them.

"Your puny weapons are USELESS against me!" Dio said with a laugh.

Flora growled and pocketed her rifle, this time pulling out a pair of fusion grenades which she hurled like frisbees. One of them hit Dio and clamped onto him while the other hit the wall behind him and stuck. Flora triggered the detonation and Dio was caught in the heart

of a tiny newborn star. When the light faded, Dio was standing in a crater, laughing.

"You think you can kill me with toys?" he demanded.

Flora snarled and rushed in, her fingers shifting into claws as she ran. Dio shifted his weight to meet her, but he didn't have her speed. She slipped in under his guard and ripped her claws across his chest. The wounds sealed up almost as fast as she could make them, but Flora kept slashing, her arms a blur as she tore into the MLE.

She suddenly came to a stop as Dio grabbed her by her arms. "You are WEAK!" Dio said, and tore Flora apart. She fell to the ground where she melted into shadow. The shadow flowed along the ground, then reformed into her body, perfectly whole. She snarled and shifted form.

Dio rushed at her as her body shifted and flowed, his hands frosting over as he punched at her. Flora's amorphous form fell back, then lunged forwards as a demonic wolf, razor sharp teeth closing on Dio's arm.

"BAD DOG!" Dio said with a laugh, his eyes flashing with the same power that had slain Musa. Flora's form exploded, then melted back into shadows. She reformed again, this time not even bothering with anything beyond a vaguely human shape made of shadows. She lashed out with her amorphous limbs, tearing at Dio with her power.

"The World: Time Stop!" Dio shouted. The world froze around him, but the Time Stabilizer Flora had incorporated into her form flashed and she continued her assault.

Dio only laughed before beginning his own attack.

From her hiding place Bloom could hear the sounds of the battle. It had been going for what felt like years, but was probably only

minutes. She checked the clock. It hadn't been minutes, it had been *hours.* Whatever Flora was doing in there, she and this Dio guy had been fighting for almost four hours at this point.

Suddenly it went silent.

Flora had told her that the likely outcomes of the fight were victory or a reset of the universe when Flora died. The universe hadn't reset yet, so that was good, right? Bloom opened the door and stepped out into the ruins of the great hall with Aisha half a step behind her.

The vista before her took her breath away. Flora lay in a crater, wheezing as blood flowed from several of her wounds. A man stood over her. He was breathing heavily, but he had no obvious injuries save a small scorch mark on his left arm.

Dio Brando.

"Bloom, run!" Aisha said, flashing into her fairy form as she pushed Bloom away from the MLE. The pink liquid her magic manifested as, Morphix, Bloom thought it was called, appeared around her hands. It flowed and formed into a staff as she moved on Dio.

The MLE was tired. The girl he'd just fought hadn't been able to inflict any wounds he couldn't recover from, but she'd taken a frustratingly long time to subdue. And now there was this girl with her pink staff thing. He turned to deal with the newest insect to challenge him.

Aisha opened the fight by swinging her staff with a two-handed blow that caught Dio on the jaw. Amazingly, it left a visible mark where it hit.

"You WEAKLING!" Dio roared. His fist lashed out to smash the staff in half. It carried on to impact the non-looper in the stomach. The force of the blow lifted her off her feet and hurled her into what was left of one of the great hall's enormous tables. She struck with a sickening crunch and crumpled to the ground, unmoving.

"Aisha!" Bloom shouted, rushing over to the fallen fairy. She'd only met the girl a week ago, but she'd already felt a connection, and to have it ripped away like this along with all of her friends...

"There you are," Dio said. "You're the one I'm after! Give me the Dragon Fire!"

Bloom looked around. Techna, Musa, and Stella were probably dead. Aisha was dying. Flora was...she wasn't sure what Flora was, but it didn't look good. And this man was responsible for all of it. Hot tears burned in her eyes as she turned to glare at him. "You killed them! You- You- MONSTER!" Bloom flashed into her fairy form, her hair drifting up behind her and glowing with red-orange power. She clenched her fists "You attack my school, hurt my classmates, kill my friends. You want the Dragon Fire? THIS IS THE DRAGON FIRE!"

A massive wave of orange fire exploded out from the fairy, expanding until it covered all of Alfea in a ball of burning orange. It paused for a moment, then exploded outwards, leaving a changed world in its wake.

Fand watched her monitors in stunned awe. She let out an impressed whistle as she saw what Bloom had done. "Note to self, double check safety margin on Bloom Ascending..." she muttered.

When the light of the fire cleared, the six Winx were hovering together in their base fairy forms over Alfea's quad. All around them Alfea had been completely restored. Before them stood Dio Brando.

"What did you do?" Dio demanded. He tried to call upon his powers, but they refused to answer.

"I am Bloom," the red haired fairy said, taking Stella and Flora's hands in her own. Musa took Stella's free hand while Techna took Flora's. Aisha hesitated for a moment, then took Musa's hand with

her own. "I am the fairy of the Dragon Flame. This is my world, and you are not welcome!"

The six fairies shared a look, then nodded. They shifted, Techna taking Aisha's hand to form a closed circle with Dio directly beneath them. "Winx, Convergence!" A massive, glowing, six-pointed star formed in their midst, connecting the six friends with lines of power. The energy swirled for a moment, then slammed down on the MLE like the hammer of an angry god.

When the smoke cleared, Dio was gone.

Dio Brando Awoke somewhere else. His plans had been thwarted once again! He'd been so close! The fairies would pay. He would make them pay for this defeat. Especially the red-haired one in the blue outfit. She would pay with her soul.

He shifted, and something felt off. He looked down and screamed. Those fairies! What had they done to him? Why was he wearing a short, pink, one-piece dress? If there was an answer, it was not forthcoming. Dio howled in impotent rage.

9.5 (Awesomedude17)

Flora Awoke in some dusty, run-down town, and then Pinged. A man walking by noticed it, and looked around.

"Uh, hi!"

The man looked at the woman, and scoffed.

"What the hell do you want?"

"Where am I, and who are you?"

"Paradise, Arizona, the shittiest place on Earth. My name sucks, so I'm not saying."

"You the local anchor?" Flora began walking by him.

"Yes. What's you name, considering 'common courtesy?'" The man said with air quotes.

"Flora."

"Oh, you're the fairy, vampire hybrid thing that put that vampire in a dress."

"Dio Brando had it coming, you know, and it wasn't all me."

"Whatever, point is, I don't care. What I will say is that you should leave. Things get ugly on Friday." The man walked away.

Flora blinked, and decided that this man knew what was happening.

"Oh, and they call me Dude." The Postal Dude said, taking out a pistol, and checking the chamber.

"Oh, okay then." Flora quickly ran off.

The Dude sighed. Time to go to the bank, and get into the middle of a robbery, again.

9.6 (lord Martiya)

The Winx, all Awake, were worried. It was the Loop after Dio Brando's visit, and the Trix had disappeared. Well, they had not exactly disappeared, but they had made no attempt at stealing Stella's ring or whatever. It was already the time of the dance, and the Trix hadn't even tried to ruin it, it had been Mirta and Lucy of all people, and with the same plan to boot (aside from entering dressed as Specialists, as they didn't know the secret passages).

Then the three witches showed up in their 'civilian' outfits right after the dance.

"Special delivery for Flora, Tecna, Musa and Stella." Icy announced. "Please sign her-HEY! What's the deal, red?!"

"What's in the box, and what curse will be activated by them signing?" Bloom demanded, a fireball aimed at the witch's face.

"No curse, as there's just too many ways to block it and we didn't expect there was anyone dumb enough to take said precautions." Darcy deadpanned. "That's first MONTH material, by the way…"

"It's Fairies, they're too important to learn quite a few important things." Stormy commented.

"Anyway, we're contract-bound to not say what we created and put in this box." Icy explained. "Our customer told us to say she's Fand, and you'd understand."

"She's right." Flora admitted before signing, immediately imitated by Tecna, Musa and Stella.

"Give back the ring." Riven ordered, and Darcy reluctantly gave back Stella's ring before leaving with her sisters.

"Who is this Fand?" Sky asked.

"Can't tell, it's a secret." Flora replied as she opened the box.

Revealing a gigantic chocolate cake decorated with a Dio Brando figure that appeared to be burning. An EDIBLE Dio Brando figure that appeared to be burning.

"Since when can they bake?" Flora asked.

"They bought it on Earth, it's a Sachertorte." Bloom explained while Tecna scanned the food. "They only did the figure. And likely

arranged the baking of the giant cake, or they would have attacked us earlier."

"It's untainted. Just chocolate." Tecna announced, almost unable to believe it.

The other Winx looked at her, unable to believe the Trix didn't try and use the chance to pull a prank. Then they accepted their reward.

Author's Notes:

9.1: Because "creepy stalker bishie" was too good a line to waste. I guess Stella got into Anime at some point? I blame Musa.

9.2: Yeah, I wouldn't stick around for that one either.

9.3: I'd argue with this one, but then it was pointed out to me that the best Magix has to offer in terms of competition for Darcy is the Lightrock brainwashi- I mean correctiona- I mean *resort* . Yeah. That explains far more than it should.

9.4: Okay, lots going on here. The Winx show off their full power, they get a firm reminder of the worst the loops have to offer, and Bloom... What the heck is up with Bloom?

9.5: When you take the most combat capable MLE in Yggdrasil and utterly humiliate him, you tend to pick up a bit of street cred.

9.6: ...Fand is a very nice Admin.

Chapter 10

The four adventurers bravely descended into the dungeon. Calia the Drow druid, wielding the powers of both life and darkness and accompanied by her faithful wolf companion, Zargold the dwarven barbarian, armed with his almighty axe, Kazon, the halfling battle mage, equally adept with both bow and spell, and Sylvia, a human priestess of the great god of the Sun, together they seek to conquer this den of evil and vanquish the great beast that had made the ruins its lair.

The ogre bellows its rage and swings its massive club at Calia. The dark elf twists aside just in time to evade the blow, and Zargold rushes in to grapple with his-

"Techna!" Kazon said. "I thought we agreed no grappling!"

"That was last game," Zargold said. "It's an effective tactic."

"It slows down the game," Calia said.

"It's not that complicated," Zargold said. "I don't understand why the four of you have such a problem with it."

Let me get out the rule book...

"Bloom!" Sylvia said. "Don't encourage her! Techna, the grappling section is thirty pages long!"

"Stella's right," Kazon said. "You're the only one who can even begin to remember all those rules."

"Please, Techna," Calia said. "I'd really like to finish this game in a reasonable amount of time. Please?"

"Alright, but only because Flora asked nicely," Zargold said.

So what are you doing instead?

"Making a called shot to cut off the hand that's holding the club."

Sigh. Okay, let me see if I can find the rules for dismemberment...

10.2 (Awesomedude17)

Flora had noticed that Techna was not her usual self this loop and became worried. So when night came...

"Techna, what happened?"

Techna rubbed her temples.

"You know the loop where there's cyborgs, mooing war machines, photosynthesis surviving humans, mind controlling psychics, cardboard box loving heroes, vampires, nanomachines, ghosts *AND w* ar vehicles that have nuclear payloads?"

"... Say what?"

"The Metal Gear Loops."

"Can't say I heard of that."

Techna sighed.

"Oh my gosh... Well... I became a cyborg myself... And it's complicated..."

"How?"

Techna took out a high-frequency blade and stared at it.

"Let's just say... It's very hard to follow, and not even the Anchor there fully understands that world. Also, a blonde guy chased us on a unicycle."

"Okay, I'll take your word for it. Let's just... Go out?"

Techna pouted, but nodded nonetheless.

"Sure. I could go for some Brain Bleach."

"I'll decide if it's that bad or confusing when I go there."

"Good luck, Flora." Techna replied, chuckling.

10.3 (lord Martiya)

Flora had planned it as a nice Baseline Loop with all of her Awake friends. For all of five seconds before finding out WHO had replaced Stella: Minako Aino, Sailor Venus. AKA a tomboyish Stella on permanent sugar high. And one of the oldest Loopers around.

"NOT HER!" the Trix cried out when they saw her on stage at Miss Magix.

As Minako sang (better than Musa, to the latter's chagrin) while casually dodging the Trix' increasingly desperate attempt at sabotage, Flora thought to how Minako's presence had changed the Loop. For starters, the Trix still had to find out that the Dragonfire was in Bloom and not in the Ring of Solaria: when the Trix had tried their kidnapping scheme, Minako had reflexively kicked them and Knut down for the count before even noticing she had been ambushed, and with Musa deciding it was to be a Loop with a relationship with Darcy they had missed their other chance.

Then there was the fact Darcy tried to defeat her in hand-to-hand every time she had a chance (keyword: TRIED), how Timmy was now dating Mirta thanks to the meddling from the self-proclaimed

Goddess of Love, and-Did Darcy just tried to sabotage Minako with hellfire?

"Seller's market, sweety: twenty thousands or nothing." Minako said. "In advance."

"You win." Icy admitted as she paid the money.

After counting it, Minako handed over the Ring of Solaria the Trix had just rented, and left.

"You sure it's a good idea?" Flora asked her.

"Why not? You yourself told me the thing doesn't hold the Dragonfire and has no consequence, and they know better than try and keep the Ring." Minako replied.

Surprisingly, the disgruntled Trix gave back the ring after verifying it did not contain the Dragonfire… And Darcy did NOT attack Minako.

"Next time, princess, next time!" the witch threatened.

"As you wish." Minako replied.

"Who's the madgirl?" Diaspro asked.

"Minako, princess of Solaria." Bloom replied. "And-"

"I know her fame, thank you."

In their hiding place, the two fairies and Sky shuddered at the thought. They had NOT expected the self-proclaimed love goddess to try and set them in a three-way relationship-and if there was one thing Bloom and Diaspro ALWAYS agreed was that it was a horrible idea.

Darcy knocked out her sisters. They had not taken well Minako revealing that Bloom was the holder of the Dragonfire and that she had always known, nor that they had to PAY her to be told.

It wasn't like Darcy had appreciated it, but she was calm enough to not try and murder her in public… Not for that, at least.

"I WILL HAVE REVENGE, MINAKO OF SOLARIA!" Darkar cried out as he escaped from his newest fangirls-the newly-resurrected Three Ancestral Witches. Who Minako had convinced they were in love with him.

"That was cruel." Bloom pointed out.

"But funny, in a horror movie way." Minako replied.

"That too.

Minako was towering over the fallen form of Valtor, guilty of brainwashing her in-Loop father.

"I expected better." she said.

"Mina, you kick really strong… And Valtor sucks at meelee." Musa told her.

"I know! I just expected him to wear armour and resist a few more kicks before his bones started liquefying…"

"Prepare to meet your fate, Minako!" Darkar shouted. "I have the Relix now, and once I read it I shall have its power!"

"Do it."

Darkar laughed, and did just that.

"IT BURNS!"

Minako picked up the book, read it, and commented: "It's not that bad… At least the author makes an effort at developing the character."

10.4 (Crossoverpairinglover)

"I am Fire and Life Incarnate"

"You know, this was a bad idea" Musa stated for all four of the Awake Winx.

For trying to help Bloom awaken her full powers early this loop backfired.

For one thing, they were a little different than normal.

"Now and Forever" Bloom stated with immense power "I am Phoenix!"

The Phoenix Force had replaced the Dragon Flame.

10.5

Flora wandered around Alfea, looking for Techna. Her girlfriend hadn't returned to their dorm last night, and Flora was concerned. It was unlikely Techna had been kidnapped or even attacked, she and the other loopers would have noticed that, but it was more than likely Techna had gotten caught up in some project of hers and had forgotten to sleep. As admirable as Flora found Techna's work ethic, she really preferred it when the purple haired girl didn't work herself to exhaustion.

Flora continued her circuit of Alfea, finally stumbling upon a small building in a remote corner of the school that she was fairly certain

wasn't supposed to be there. From the outside it looked like a very high tech shed, with metal walls covered in complicated circuitry, but Flora knew what it was. She sighed, then walked up to the door and knocked.

"Huh?" Techna's voice came from within. "Uh, come in, the door's unlocked."

Flora pushed open the door and stepped into the control center of the most powerful computer Techna had so far been able to produce. "Techna," Flora said. "Do you know what time it is?"

"Of course I do," Techna said. "It's seven in the evening."

"And do you know what day it is?" Flora asked.

Techna blinked. "I'm... guessing it's not still Tuesday, is it?"

"No," Flora said.

"Wednesday?" Techna asked hopefully.

"Yes," Flora said. "But only because I went and found you. Techna, you should know better than to stay up all night."

"Sorry, Flora," Techna said. "I got caught up in something."

"I guessed as much," Flora said. "What were you working on?"

"You remember how Bloom was able to beat Dio Brando?" Techna said.

"Yes," Flora said, unconsciously rubbing a spot on her left shoulder as she remembered that fight. "You kept plugging Bloom into machines for several loops after that."

"I was trying to figure out how Bloom was able to do that," Techna said. "I mean, she's a powerful fairy, but she's not that powerful. There had to be something else at work."

"Her powers have always responded to her emotions," Flora said. "I figured that must have been what happened."

"True," Techna said. "I think that's exactly what happened, but what I couldn't figure out was *how* . I ran every test I could think of on Bloom, but I couldn't find anything that explained it."

"So how does this explain you staying up for twenty four hours?" Flora asked.

"Because I ran a full high definition magical scan on Bloom a few loops back, and I've been running the data through my computer ever since, and today, er, last night, I finally found something." Techna pulled up a screen full of incomprehensible numbers and letters. "Look at this. Right here."

"Techna," Flora said with fond exasperation. "I don't speak fluent computer. I have no idea what I'm supposed to be looking at."

"Oh, sorry," Techna said. "I'll try to render it in something less technical." Techna tapped a few keys and a 3D model of Bloom appeared on the screen. A moment later a visual representation of her magic appeared as well.

"Alright, what am I supposed to be looking at?" Flora asked.

"Just a moment, let me remove the physical model and zoom in," Techna said, tapping in a series of commands to the computer. The representation of Bloom's body vanished, leaving just her magical signature behind. The image expanded as Techna zoomed in on a point near the center of the model.

Flora peered at the model. There was something strange about it. "I don't see... What *is* that?" the Anchor asked, perplexed.

"I don't know," Techna said. "That's what I've been trying to figure out myself. I've run it through the computer several different ways, but I

haven't found anything. I was hoping you might now, you've spent more time studying magic than I have."

"I'm not sure," Flora said. "I can think of several things it might be, but I'm not sure." She looked at the screen for a moment. "Could you show magical resonance, rather than signature?"

Techna blinked. "I hadn't thought of that," she admitted. "One minute." She started typing and the image shifted dramatically. The magical field vanished, and the area around it came to life. The tiny irregularity in the center blossomed into a massive cloud of color.

"What is *that?* " Techna asked. "I've never seen anything like it."

"It looks like a Convergence bond," Flora said. "But there's something strange about it. It's like Bloom's performing a magical Convergence with herself."

"That's impossible," Techna said. "Convergences require at least two people."

"I know," Flora said. "Which raises the question, who is Bloom Converging with?"

"You have an idea, don't you?" Techna asked.

"I... might have something," Flora said. "Bloom carries the power of the Dragon Fire."

"Yes, I already knew that," Techna said. "Where are you going with this?"

"The power came from the Great Dragon," Flora said. "But it's clearly not all of the power the Dragon possessed."

"I can see that," Techna said. "Bloom's powerful, but she's nowhere near strong enough to create the universe."

"Exactly," Flora said. "All that power Bloom doesn't have, it must still be around. That means the Great Dragon is still around."

"You think Bloom's Converging with the Great Dragon," Techna said.

"Yes," Flora said. "It would explain where that power comes from, and it would explain why her powers respond to strong emotions."

"Because strong emotions would put her more in sync with the Great Dragon!" Techna said excitedly. "It's a force of creation, of course powerful emotions would improve one's connection with it!"

"Exactly," Flora said. "So, mystery solved?"

"Of course not!" Techna said. "I have so many more tests I want to-" the purple haired fairy suddenly flopped forward, out cold.

"I think they can wait for tomorrow," Flora said, gently picking up her sleeping girlfriend and carrying her up to the room the two shared. She gently tucked Techna into her bed and smiled down at the sleeping girl.

"Good night, Techna," Flora said, gently kissing the girl's forehead. "Sweet dreams."

10.6 (lord Martiya)

The Winx Club was wholly Awake, and they were enjoying their 'first' day while discussing how to deal with the Trix this loop when they had their route blocked by Cloudtower's first years plus the Trix. Most of them, the Trix included, didn't look hostile, just curious (Mirta even had a camcorder). One of them, however, was Mitzi, who in this loop had magic powers and, for obvious reason, had been accepted at Cloudtower.

"Thank you, Fand." Bloom whispered.

"Today I'll finally destroy you, Bloom!" she declared. "On Earth I had to hide my powers, but here-"

Bloom hit her with a light ball while shouting "Abracadabra".

"Just sealed your powers." Bloom said.

"What?!"

Mitzi made some moves, apparently trying-and failing-to hit Bloom with some spell.

"NO!"

Mitzi ran away in the direction of Cloudtower, crying all the way, immediately followed by the firsties, most of which were chuckling with the rest joining their number as they realized what Bloom had just done.

"Just to be sure... You just scammed her into believing you sealed her powers and her magic acted on it, right?" Icy asked Bloom.

"Of course." Bloom admitted. "I even used the most stereotypical fake spell of Earth…"

"Fully knowing what that means?" Stella asked.

"That she's going to be the laughing stock of a school where cunning counts more than anything."

"Don't even want to know why you're at Alfea and not with us." Stormy said.

"We'll send you the video of her finding out, if the headmistress doesn't do it herself." Darcy added before teleporting herself and her sisters to Cloudtower.

"You sure she did it with this "Abracadabra" spell?" Griffin asked her student after Mitzi told her what had happened in town.

"Yes, headmistress, I-"

"Why, Great Dragon? Why is this crop so troublesome? First the most gifted one is crippled by self-esteem issues, now this…"

"Uh?"

"You stupid girl, the fairy tricked you! She cried out the most typical fake spell OF YOUR OWN WORLD and told you she had sealed your powers, and as you were mentally deficient enough to fall for it without proof your magic did not respond to your call! Students of Cloudtower, take this as a lesson to never underestimate a fairy: they're soft, not stupid, and you should fear the wrath of a nice person almost as much as you should fear mine."

Griffin opened her hand, and a glass of "stuff" materialized in it.

"As for you cretin, I'll have you know your fellow first year Mirta has filmed everything, and she'll now give me the recording to be made public." Griffin decreed before drinking, as Mirta obediently gave her the memory card.

"You can't!" Mitzi cried out.

"I remember being there when one of Alfea's student said the same thing to Faragonda when her deputy suggested a rather harsh punishment. For once I'll take a page from my colleague. Just know this: there are few things I can't do, and making an example of a foolish little girl is not one of them."

Turned out that the Magical Dimension had its own version of Youtube, and a large number of celebrities owed Cloudtower's headmistress a large number of favours. Enough Griffin felt she could cash a few to have them publish that video.

And Bloom made Earth rediscover magic just so everyone at Gardenia could see that video.

10.7 (lord Martiya)

It was Halloween night, and Bloom had convinced her Awake companions to make a horror story contest between themselves.

The stories had been scary, with Stella's as the best one so far. It wasn't easy beating one where all of them fell in love with Edward AND Billy… Then came Bloom's turn.

"In two phrases I'll have you screaming." she announced.

"Bring it." Stella replied.

"The Trix are Stealth Loopers since Flora's second Loop. In their Formative Loop, they were Heterodyne Sparks."

"It wasn't us this time! We swear!" Icy protested.

"Then why did the fairies scream so loud to wake me up?!" Griffin asked.

10.8 (lord Martiya)

Stella had decided to make another attempt at creating a new shade of pink. The same thing had once exploded on her face, resulting in Alfea's lab destroyed and her being suspended for her whole first school year and then held back… But not even Looping would stop her from trying again. That was why she was being the Trix' lab assistant: according to Flora (who had spent a few Loops doing the same), the three witches were beyond paranoid in terms of safety measures-or would have been if it hadn't been for the zombie apocalypse, the plague of the werebeds, and all the other accidents.

And she was seeing them in action, as they produced a safe with more locks than the main vault of Magix' museum (and that would have stopped VALTOR) and then took their chemistry sets out of it and checked it for use. Then Stella noticed something strange in the safety wards.

"Is it supposed to have that rune in such an unfashionable placement?" she asked.

Stormy facepalmed, and Icy pinched her nose.

"What do you even care of fashionability in safety wards?" the ice witch asked.

"Chill, sister. Another check won't hurt." Darcy said as it looked it. "No, it's not supposed to have that rune there. Nor the others."

Icy and Stormy came there and looked at the ward, and could come only to one conclusion: somehow, someone had broken in their secured lab WITHOUT THEM NOTICING and altered the safety wards.

"Look! If we tried the experiment to put off chlorine trifluoride fire it would have multiplied it a hundredfolds!" Stormy exclaimed. "And the fire suppressor would have exploded!"

"And this one would corrupt wheat products!" Darcy shouted.

"Who could be THAT stupid to sabotage your experiments?!" Stella wondered.

"I don't know, but we're involving Griffin." Icy decided. "Whoever's the idiot, she can find out faster than us, and I can't think of something bad enough to do him. Or her."

As expected, Griffin took ten minutes to find the culprit and hoist her in the main hall of the school. As NOT expected, the motivations of

the culprit, Rachel (a boy-crazy witch that looked like a green-haired Bloom), was that Darcy had accidentally stolen away the attention of the boys at a party.

"Of all the petty motivations to risk this world's destruction, this takes the cake." Griffin declared. "Now, do you have any reason for me to not call the guardians of Light Rock on you?"

Rachel looked at Stella for a moment, then whispered something.

"You did WHAT with Stella's chemistry set?!" Griffin exclaimed. "Even if you hadn't made ME pink for a week with that trick, your distillation and sale caused an explosion and nearly provoked an INTERPLANETARY WAR! And for so little money too… Ediltrude, call the government of Solaria. I'm washing my hands of this."

Needless to say, Stella would finally create that shade of pink without explosions.

"But what was that witch using your chemistry set for?" Bloom asked her blonde friend.

"Creating unlicenced lactose-free milk, it's highly regulated on this planet." Stella replied. "Don't ask me why, because I don't want to know."

10.9

"Strangers from distant lands, friends of old, you've been summoned here to answer the threat of Mordor," Elrond said. "Middle Earth stands upon the brink of destruction. None can escape it. You will unite or you will fall. Each race is bound to this fate, this one doom." He turned to look at the black-haired hobbit seated next to the Grey Witch. "Bring forth the Ring, Frodo."

Bloom watched as the hobbit rose from his seat next to her and placed the cursed band of gold on the stone table in the center of the council. Scattered around the council, the other four fairies in attendance got their first glimpse of the evil artifact.

One of the men, Boromir, rose, muttering about "Isildur's Bane" and visions of doom as he reached for the ring.

"That would not be wise," Bloom said, her voice resonating with sudden power. " *Ash nazg durbatulûk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulûk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul."*

Boromir staggered back as the council shook under the influence of Bloom's voice.

"Never before has any voice uttered the words of that tongue here in Imladris, Ilmarë," Elrond said.

"I do not ask your forgiveness, Master Elrond," Bloom said, "For the Black Speech of Mordor may yet be spoken here again. The Ring is altogether evil."

"Ah, it is a gift!" the man said. "A gift to the foes of Mordor!"

"Yes," Musa said, rising from her own seat. "A gift. The sort of gift that stabs you in the back when you're not looking. Sit down."

"Musa is right," Stella said. "You cannot use it. No one can, save Sauron himself."

"And what, would a ranger know of this matter?" Boromir asked.

"She is no mere ranger," Flora said, rising from her own seat. "She is Stella, daughter of Radius. You owe her your allegiance."

"This is Isildur's Heir?" Boromir asked.

"And heir to the throne of Gondor," Techna said, not bothering to rise from her seat. Supposedly she was a dwarf this loop, despite looking

no different from normal.

"Gondor has no Queen," Boromir said. "Gondor needs no Queen."

"Stella is right," Bloom said. "We cannot use it."

"Then you have only one choice," Elrond said. "The Ring must be destroyed."

"Indeed," Techna said, rising from her seat to scrutinize the object in question. "The question is how? Rings of Power are not so easily unmade."

"The Ring was forged in the fires of Mount Doom," Elrond said. "Only there can it be unmade."

"That is improbable," Techna said. "I will grant there are a number of powerful and complex enchantments layered through the artifact, but the idea that its sole weakness is a specific volcano is manifestly absurd."

"And what other method would you use?" Elrond asked.

"Well I'd begin with the obvious," Techna stated. "Reproduce the conditions inside a volcano and place the Ring within those conditions. Should that fail, there are a number of further escalating methods of destruction that can be applied to it, but ultimately nothing is truly vulnerable to only a single avenue of attack."

"Reproduce the conditions inside a volcano," a dwarf said skeptically. "And how do you plan to achieve this?"

"I have my methods," Techna said. "You can watch if you would like."

"You can truly achieve this?" Elrond asked.

"Yes," Techna said. "I imagine I will have found an effective means to destroy the Ring by this time tomorrow at the very latest."

"You will forgive me if I ask that you allow others to observe your efforts," Elrond said.

"Of course," Techna said. "I should think at least one representative of each race should observe. Bloom, Flora, Stella, and perhaps Mister Baggins here?"

"Gondor demands an observer of its own," Boromir said.

"Very well then," Techna said. "Musa, would you be willing to observe?"

"Of course," Musa said. "When will you be starting?"

"It will take me an hour or so to set everything I need up," Techna said. "Lord Elrond, I will need a clear space to work in."

"Very well," Elrond said. "You may use the smithy's courtyard."

"Excellent," Techna said. "If the observers could convene there in two hours, I will commence with the Ring's destruction. In the meantime, Mister Baggins, if you would hold onto the Ring for us?"

The hobbit nodded and reclaimed the innocent-looking piece of jewelry.

"Then it would seem this meeting is concluded," Elrond said. The various dignitaries started to drift away to their rooms.

Flora walked over to Techna. "You know, you could just teleport the Ring into Mount Doom."

"I could," Techna allowed. "But this way I get to see what *else* the Ring is vulnerable to!"

"You're turning the major conflict of this loop into a science experiment," Flora said.

"Well, yes," Techna said.

"Never change, Techna," Flora said with a fond smile. "Never change."

Author's Notes:

10.1: D&D players of the world, be honest. Does ANYONE actually like using the grapple rules?

10.2: Metal Gear, AKA Mind Screw the Series. Also, Techna may have taken up collecting swords. Not quite sure.

10.3: My response to seeing this loop for the first time: WhatisthisIdon'teven. Sometimes it just doesn't pay to ask.

10.4: Remember children! Always check whether you have the right fire deity *before* awakening its full powers!

10.5: Explanation for Bloom shenanigans and Techna learning to emote seems to have turned her into a bit of an over-excited mad scientist. You might want to keep an eye on that, Flora.

10.6: Being good does not necessarily mean being *nice* . Forget that at your own peril.

10.7: *whimper*

10.8: About time Stella got that shade of pink working! Also, safety conscious Trix? What gives?

10.9: You would not believe how much research went into deciding who Bloom should replace for this loop... Also, Techna, why? You could have had such a fun journey! Why did you have to break the plot? Whyyyyyy?

Chapter 11

Admin Space - Fand's Office

"Fand?" Frigg asked, poking her head into the fairy Admin's office. "You missed lunch."

"Huh?" Fand asked, glancing up from her work. "Lunch? Oh. I'll eat something later. Too busy right now."

"Busy?" Frigg asked. "Since when are you busy?"

"I'm always busy," Fand said absently, turning back to her coding.

"That doesn't sound like you," Frigg muttered, stepping into Fand's office to get a look at what the fairy was working on. She didn't recognize it at first, but as Fand scrolled back up to double check a piece of code, its purpose became clear. "Fand!" Frigg said. "What are you doing?"

"Trying to get the rest of my loop online," Fand said, biting the tip of her tongue in concentration.

"I can see that, but... Indeterminate baseline? Quarantined personality files? Fand, if someone really wanted to, they could probably report you for this!"

"I don't care," Fand said. "I'm just trying to get my loop online."

"Why are you putting this much effort into getting this online?" Frigg asked. "Why not just activate it?"

"It's corrupted, remember?" Fand said. "I don't want the corruption to mess with my loopers."

Frigg stared at Fand in disbelief. "Fand, I know how much you like your shipping charts, but this is ridiculous! You're putting in work that

could reduce the stability of your loop just to keep your precious pairings together!"

"It's not about the shipping charts!" Fand shouted, whirling on the senior Admin.

A stunned silence filled the air.

"Forget I said that," Fand said, turning back to her work.

"Fand," Frigg said. "If it's not about the shipping charts, what is it about?"

Fand looked at her code for a moment, then sighed. "It's about them," she said, gesturing vaguely at her screens.

"Your loopers?" Frigg asked, surprised. "You're putting in all this effort just for them?"

"Yes," Fand said. "I am."

"Why?" Frigg asked. "I understand wanting to help them, but fixing Yggdrasil comes first. It always does."

"I know that," Fand said. "But they've earned it." She turned back to the senior Admin. "In the last one hundred thousand loops, how many times do you think I've had to send one or more of them to a punishment loop?"

"How would I know?" Frigg said. "A thousand?"

"You're off," Fand said. "By a lot. Do you want to know the real number?"

"I guess," Frigg said. "How many times?"

"Six," Fand said. "Not sixty, not six hundred, *six* . That's *it.* "

Frigg blinked. "Okay, that's impressive."

"I know," Fand said, turning back to her computer for a moment. "When I started I heard so many horror stories about loopers who crashed their loops on a regular basis. Given how powerful my loopers are even in baseline, I figured I'd be dealing with the same problem. But no. They're amazingly well behaved, and the few times I've had to interact with them, they've been extremely cooperative."

"You like them," Frigg said.

"Yes," Fand said. "I couldn't ask for better loopers. I told them I would do my best to fix their loop without harming them. They trust me to get it done right. I don't want to disappoint them."

"Fand..." Frigg said.

"Frigg, I'm going to do this," Fand said. "I don't care what you say. So please, just go back to your loop and leave me alone."

Frigg stared at the junior Admin for a moment before she spoke again. "I'll bring you a sandwich or something. You shouldn't be coding something this delicate on an empty stomach."

"...Thanks, Frigg," Fand said.

"Don't mention it," Frigg said. "I just hope everything works out for your loop."

"I hope so too," Fand said, turning back to her work.

"How is it that you are still a terrible driver after all these loops, ma'am?" Flora asked her old mentor.

"You try driving the Mako and then tell me how easy it is," Commander Shepard said, glaring at the vehicle in question.

"Commander," Techna said, glancing up from the codex entries she was perusing, "the Mako's designed to make driving easy. I do not

understand why you have so much trouble with it."

"It handles like a drunken rhinoceros," Shepard said. "Everyone agrees."

"I see," Techna said. "By any chance, did you read the operating manual for it?"

"There's an operating manual?" Shepard asked.

"Yes, in digital form," Techna said. "Judging by your ignorance of its existence, I can now tell you why you have so much trouble driving the vehicle."

"Oh?" Shepard said. "Please, enlighten me."

"You've been leaving the Mass Effect core active," Techna said. "It's only meant to be used for landings and retrieval. All this time, you've been driving around a tank with five hundred horsepower and an effective mass of eight kilograms. Of course you're having steering problems. "

There was a moment of silence in the Normandy's bay.

"Flora?" Shepard said.

"Yes ma'am?" Flora said.

"Your girlfriend is annoying," Shepard said.

"Whatever you say, ma'am," Flora said.

"I really hate you natural magic users," Asuna growled, waiting for her MP to recover. "The game just hands you powers without you needing to put in any work for them."

"I've put several hundred millennia into studying magic in my home loop," Flora said, calling on her own magic. "I like to think that

counts. Pollen Splash!" A blast of yellow powder collided with an oncoming mob of enemies and annihilated them in an explosion of floral might.

"You see?" Asuna said. "That! There's no way you should have anywhere near enough MP to keep *doing* that! That's a high level spell, requirement of seven hundred water magic skill, seven fifty wind magic skill, and four hundred holy magic skill! The MP costs of spells like that are obscene, and you're making it even worse by not using the proper incantation! And that's the twelfth time you've cast it in the last ten minutes!"

"Really?" Flora asked. "I never really thought it was that big a deal. Sure, it takes a bit of that blue bar in my vision, but it's not that much and it comes back pretty fast."

"Flora, how much MP do you have?" Asuna asked, not sure if she really wanted to hear the answer.

"In my current form?" Flora asked.

"Yes, in your current form," Asuna said. "I don't even want to know what your Enchantix form does to your MP."

"Uh, the bar says I have... about seventeen thousand," Flora said. "Is that a lot?"

Asuna bit back a sharp response. "Yes, Flora. It's a lot."

"Oh, alright then," Flora said. "I guess I see your point then. Sorry."

"Not your fault," Asuna said. "And I can still beat you with a sword any day of the week."

"True," Flora said. "I think the next wave's about to start."

"Then let's get back to killing them," Asuna said. "I swear, this is the last time I try for an item with a quarter of a percent drop rate."

11.3 (Awesomedude17)

"Vinyl. What do you have to say for yourself now?" Celestia scorned.

"I'm sorry, and I'll never do it again."

"What exactly happened?" Flora asked.

"Apparently, Musa had met this unicorn mare, and began using music based magic with her. It got out of control quickly and Alfea... well." Bloom motioned towards the ruins of the castle.

"Really Musa?" Stella muttered.

Techna sighed.

"I wonder how Aisha would react."

"Probably really badly." Flora coughed as some rubble fell next to her, uprooting some dust.

11.4

"That's it?" Stella asked.

"More or less," Spiderman said. "Those are Wasp's main powers."

"So I can shrink, fly, and shoot energy beams from my hands," Stella said.

"Yes?" Spiderman said. "What's the problem?"

"I COULD ALREADY DO THOSE THINGS!" Stella said.

"Oh," Spiderman said. "Well, uh, you can control bugs now?"

"Yes," Stella said with a shudder and a glare. "Thank you for reminding me. I'm sure that will be very useful."

"Hey, if you don't like bugs, you don't have to use them," Spiderman said.

11.5

Flora sat on her bed and grabbed her hairbrush. Her hair was still damp from the shower she'd just taken and now she needed to get it back into order. She pulled her hair around into her lap and started brushing.

"How long does that take?" Techna asked from the other side of the room. "And couldn't you just use magic?"

"I could," Flora said. "But doing it with magic never feels quite right. It takes a while, but it's the price for having long hair."

Techna looked at the awkward position Flora was twisting herself into to get at some of her hair. "Would you like some help with that?" she asked.

"I wouldn't say no," Flora said smiling gratefully.

Techna walked over and took the hairbrush out of her girlfriend's hand, then started to brush the other fairy's hair. "Why do you keep it this long anyways?" Techna asked. "It's hardly practical."

"I know," Flora said. "But baseline me liked it."

"Doesn't it get in the way?" Techna asked.

"Sometimes," Flora admitted. "And it does get stuck in doors every now and again..."

"Why don't you try cutting it short for a change?" Techna asked. "You might like it."

"Maybe," Flora said, reluctantly. "I suppose I could."

"Flora, your hair is over a meter long," Techna said. "Unless there's a logical reason for keeping it this long, you should try cutting it short, at least for one loop."

"I suppose..." Flora said.

"We're done," Techna said, holding out the brush.

"Thanks Techna," Flora said. She stood up, feeling her hair settle into its usual position on her back. She went over to the mirror and looked at her reflection. "I suppose it *is* a bit long."

"Unless there's a logical reason not to cut it..." Techna said.

Flora turned her head back and forth to get a better look at all sides of the problem. Her hair made a gentle whooshing sound as it moved. Flora considered, then turned her head again.

"I think 'whoosh' is an adequately logical reason," Flora said.

11.6 (Evilhumour)

"Dis iz strange," Techna muttered angrily, annoyed at what she and her girlfriend looped in as, tightening her grip on her 'weapon'. "Very strange."

"Iz not all *that* bad," Flora did her best not to smirk, having far too much teeth and knowing *exactly* how Techna felt about this place. "Iz just odd wez Or-"

"OI! Iz that Warboss Flora Iz see?" A massive Ork walked up to embrace the two smaller Orks in a tight hug. "Itz been *far* too long!"

With a laugh, Flora thumped her fist against the Ork hugging her, encouraging Techna to do the same. "Kaptain Bluddflagg, itz been *far* too long since iz seen your sorry arse!" With a smirk on her face,

she then shoved Techna in front of the grinning death machine. "This here iz them gurl Iz mentioned before, my Techna!"

"Itz nice-" Techna frowned, trying to remember *how* to speak properly but the Ork kaptain- *captain* simply let out a large laugh and embraced her again.

"So youz who Warboss Flora ..." Bluddflagg seemed to struggle for a word before settling on, "loves?"

With a blush on their green faces, both fairies turned Orks nodded their heads.

"Itz greatz to meet you, Techna," with a horrifying grin on his face, the looper reached into his pocket and pulled out a strange looking gun, for Ork standards. It had a single barrel, the size roughly of a toaster and towering hopper attached to it. "Herez a gift, Iz think you'd like it!"

With another blush, Techna reluctantly took the gun and, with a nod of encouragement from Flora, fired it in the air.

She was *not* expecting a *large* Nyan Cat being shot outwards, with the tell tale music playing along its rainbow trail.

With a laugh, the two loopers thumped Techna on the back.

' *Well, what's the worst that could happen?* ' Techna thought to herself, residing in the madness of being an Ork.

Commissar Yarrick rubbed his face, trying to keep his temper as reports of some sort of xeno crushed weaponry has destroyed an entire planet. The *visuals* of it, a bleeding *Nyan Cat!* , breaking through a planet was trying his patience and while he was ready to blame his Anchor for it, Russ was not Awake for this loop. Thus it went the Ork looper he was normally stuck with due to Yggdrasil's humours being infamously cruel.

Looking at his assistant Blake, who seemed to be some mental conflict with himself suddenly, he sent out a ping on a hunch.

"Lad, are you Looping?" Also, best not to beat around the bush, as it were. Things were *far* to crazy to do *that.*

"Yeah..." Blake whimpered out. "My name is normally Blo-"

"I care not, boy, because we need to take out some Orks." With a strong on the protesting boy's shoulder, Yarrick began to prepare himself for utter hell as he directed himself and boy out to meet his men.

11.7 (Shimmer712)

Stella was still sulking over her loop with Spiderman. The only thing she got out of it was useless! All the powers she got, she already had a version except fot the one that let her control bugs! *Bugs!* The blonde shuddered. She wouldn't go out of her way to squash any creep-crawly she saw - not only was that unnecessarily cruel but she would get bug guts on *something* - but she certainly didn't want anything to do with them!

"Stupid, useless bug power" she grumbled. Yeah, her Marvel loop had been a waste.

A few days later, she found herself at the window, enjoying some sunshine. She was less than happy to see a bee fly into her room.

"Ugh! Go away!" she snapped at the insect. It ignored her and continued buzzing.

Stella glared and was about to leave the room and come back when the thing was gone when a thought occurred.

"Hmmm?" Stella smirked and activated her Wasp powers, commanding the bee to leave. It obeyed. "So, I can make bugs leave

me alone? This power isn't so useless after all," she mused to herself.

Flora really wasn't thrilled with this loop she'd just Awoken in. According to her loop memories she was a cadet at the Rubinelle military academy. Emphasis on was, given the the academy was now a collapsed ruin that her unawake self had just spent a week digging out of. And now she had a band of murderous looters coming for her. Not off to a good start. Of course, the fact that the world had been devastated by meteors was another strike against this loop. Definitely not Flora's favorite loop.

"Give me tactical, Lin," a voice came on over Flora's radio.

"I've got a single soldier being pursued by a pack of raiders," another voice, presumably Lin, said. "The soldier appears to be one of ours. Shall we intervene?"

"Do it," the first voice commanded.

"Yes, sir, captain," Lin responded.

"Who are you?" Flora asked over her radio.

"Skip the introductions," the first voice said. "Fall back, and let us handle this."

"I don't think so," Flora said. "I can fight too."

"No," the voice said. "Retreat. That's an order, soldier."

"Sorry, sir," Flora said. "But I'm not retreating." She reached into her pocket and pulled out the Harkonnen. The enemy force consisted of an armored car with a machine gun mounted on it, a motorcycle, also with a mounted machine gun, and few men on foot. Flora pulled back the slide on her rifle, loading a bullet into the massive cannon. She sighted down the barrel at her target, then pulled the trigger.

The Harkonnen was a big gun. It had benefited from the attentions of Garrus Vakerian, Techna, and numerous others. These days, it fired 130mm holy bullets with a muzzle velocity best measured in double digit Mach numbers, and said bullets carried a sizable magical kick to supplement their already obscene kinetic impact. Its original form was designed to tear through tank armor like wet tissue paper. What this heavily modified version did to the car the raiders were driving was indescribable.

There was a moment of stunned silence as the raiders' vehicle disappeared in an explosion of dust and scrap metal.

"Soldier," the voice named Lin said. "You could have informed us you possessed an artillery piece."

"It's just a rifle..." Flora said.

"I don't suppose you have enough of those to arm our entire unit?" Lin asked.

"Just the one ma'am," Flora said. "I don't think normal soldiers could use it in any case."

"That's unfortunate," Lin said.

"Gawk at the weapon later," the first voice said. "We still have the rest of the raiders to deal with."

Flora sat on a pile of rubble in the aftermath of the battle. A tank came to a stop in front of her and a man dismounted from the vehicle. He walked over to where Flora was sitting, carefully picking his way through the rubble.

Flora rose and saluted. "Cadet Victoria reporting for duty, sir."

"At ease, cadet," the man said. "Captain Brenner, Twelfth Battalion."

Flora lowered her hand from its position as she considered her options. She'd sent out a Ping, but received no reply. If there was anyone else in this loop, they weren't interested in being known. That meant the loop was hers to do with as she wished.

"You were a great help in that fight," Brenner said.

"Thank you, sir," Flora said.

"There's a town nearby where you will be safe," he said. "We can take you there."

"I don't think that will be necessary," Flora said, looking around. "The world really has been destroyed, hasn't it?"

"Yes, it has," Brenner said. "But that doesn't change our duty. I can't allow someone as young as you are to continue fighting in good conscience."

"Captain," Flora said. "If we are discussing matters of age, I am more than qualified for combat. That's not what I'm interested in though."

"You don't want to be safe, and you don't want to fight?" Brenner asked. "What do you intend to do?"

"Restore the world," Flora said.

"Restore the world," Brenner said in a tone of utter disbelief.

"Enchantix," Flora whispered. The transformation swept over her body, leaving her in the familiar outfit.

Brenner blinked. "That's an impressive trick, though I doubt that outfit is at all practical. The wings are a nice touch."

"It's more practical than you'd think," Flora said with a smile. "It's a lot harder to use my full power as a human."

"Full power?" Brenner asked cautiously.

"Just watch," Flora said. She dropped to her knees, closed her eyes, and pressed her hands together as if in prayer. A green light began to form around her hands. The glow expanded, slowly covering her whole body in shimmering emerald light.

Unnoticed by Flora, a dark haired woman had pulled up in an armored car. She climbed out of her vehicle and walked over to stand next to the captain. "This is the soldier with the rifle?" she asked.

"Yes," Brenner said.

"What is she doing?" the woman asked.

"I have no idea, Lin," Brenner said. "She said something about restoring the world."

"You'll excuse my skepticism, sir," Lin said.

"It can't hurt to watch," Brenner said.

Lin looked like she wanted to respond to that, but she refrained, instead turning to observe the glowing girl.

Flora opened her eyes, revealing a brilliant green glow. " ***Soul of Nature.*** " she intoned in a voice that seemed to reverberate through reality itself. A wash of green light flowed out from her body. It rippled across the soldiers observing her like a warm summer breeze. The light continued to spread. Everywhere it touched, the air and land were cleansed of the scarring that marked the ruined landscape. The sky cleared as the massive dust clouds kicked up by the meteors were scrubbed from the air. Wreckage shifted as plant life reasserted itself. The world was healing, and Flora was the epicenter.

"Well," Lin said. "Apparently my skepticism can go stuff itself."

11.9 (Evilhumour)

"It is a *bit* funny," Remembrancer Flora said, rubbing her friend's back and doing her best not to laugh. "After all, they are some of the more insane loopers and they've taken a liking to you, and-"

"But they keep on calling me *Blake!* " The primarch whined, throwing his hands into air. "Even *after* me telling *them* that I am usually a girl and *Bloom* , they keep on calling me boy or lad or *Blake!* " With a resigned sigh, the looper did his best not to punch out a wall as he was worryingly strong this loop. "I *do* hope that Leman is okay..."

"Don't worry Blake," Flora shook her head. "He's taken a lot worse punishment in baseline, and he *did* regularly get knocked out too." With a roll of her eyes, Flora added in, "Besides, he'll probably like you *more* now, he and his brothers."

"Great, now I've got *brothers* who will view me as their little brother!" Blake groaned, finishing any resolve Flora had and starting her giggling.

"Are you certain about this?" Flora asked. "You're talking about experimenting with the most powerful force in our loops."

"I have to know," Bloom said. "I wasn't Awake for the fight with Dio Brando. I don't know how I did what you girls say I did, and I don't know if I could do it again if we had another problem like Dio."

"It'll be perfectly safe," Techna said. "I'll be monitoring the whole process. If anything goes wrong, we'll stop immediately."

"And what if it's too much to control?" Flora asked. "Every time Bloom's called on the Great Dragon's power, she's been in some sort of emotional extreme. No offense Bloom, but I don't know if you're going to be able to handle it normally."

"Wouldn't strong emotion make something harder to control?" Bloom asked.

"Yes and no," Flora said. "It really depends on what you're doing. Strong emotion is problematic if you're trying to do something delicate, but it can also augment your force of will, allowing you to achieve at least partial control over something that would usually overwhelm you. Bloom, I really don't think this is a good idea."

Bloom went to speak, then subsided. "If you're that concerned..." she said.

"No," Techna said. "Flora, I understand your concern, but we have to know. During the fight with Dio, Bloom showed a *lot* of power. Power enough to alter the mechanics of the loop. We need to know more about this."

"Why?" Flora asked. "If it's powerful enough to alter loop mechanics, then it's powerful enough that we probably shouldn't be messing around with it."

"Two reasons," Techna said. "Reason one. Dio's attack proves there are things out there in Yggdrasil that we just aren't strong enough to stop. Given that Bloom's power is sufficient to pose a probable Ascension risk should a powerful MLE get their hands on it, she needs to know how to defend it on her own. Flora, if Dio came calling again, could you do anything more than slow him down?"

"...No," Flora admitted. "I hit him with everything I had, but he's a lot stronger than I am."

"Exactly," Techna said. "Maybe someday you'll be powerful enough to stop him by yourself, but for now, Bloom's the only one we know who can do it. Flora, if we end up in a fight like that again, we need to be able to count on Bloom being able to do something about it."

Flora considered for a moment before responding. "I see your point, but I'm not convinced," the Anchor said. "If Bloom's power represents an Ascension risk, then experimenting with that power seems like a very bad idea."

"That brings us to my second point," Techna said. "We don't know how much of an Ascension risk Bloom's power actually is. I'm pretty confident that she can't actually Ascend, but I'd rather find out in a controlled environment where we can shut it down if things get out of hand than find out the hard way if Bloom Ascends by accident. By finding out now, we can either rest easy knowing it's not a problem, or we'll know how careful we need to be to prevent it. More than that, learning how it works should give Bloom a bit more control over the process. If she knows how it works and how to control it, she'll be better equipped to avoid it."

Flora considered again. "You make good points," she said. "...alright, but I want to watch too."

"Of course," Techna said.

"Are you ready Bloom?" Techna asked, looking through fire-proof glass at the fairy in question.

"I think so," Bloom said from the testing chamber she was in. "Just let me know when to start."

"Just a moment..." Techna said, hitting a series of buttons and switches on the console in front of her. Half a dozen screens came to life as the sensors connected to them came to life. "Okay, we're good!"

"So, uh, how am I supposed to do this anyways?" Bloom asked.

"Your connection with the Great Dragon is similar to a Magical Convergence link," Techna said. "Just... Converge with it."

"I don't know how to do that," Bloom said. "Maybe if I had a specific goal in mind, I might be able to, but I don't know if I can just force it."

"Hmmm," Techna said, adjusting a few dials. "I may not have thought this out all the way."

"It's alright," Flora said. "Let me try something. Bloom, can you hear me?"

"Yes, what is it Flora?"

"I have an idea about how you can connect to the Great Dragon."

"What is it?" Bloom asked.

"Focus on your magic, where it comes from. Focus on the source of your power."

Bloom closed her eyes and focused inwards. Her body began to glow with a faint orange light.

"Good, good," Flora said. "Now, you need to make it resonate with the Great Dragon's power. You have a head start because you're already working with her Fire, so this should work."

"What should I do?" Bloom asked.

"Imagine yourself, your magic, as part of the Great Dragon," Flora said. "You have her fire inside you. It remembers its original owner. Use that connection."

"I think... Yes! I get it now!" Bloom said. "I can feel something!"

Techna looked at her girlfriend. "This is why I let you deal with the really fancy magic."

"Because I actually know what I'm doing?" Flora teased. "It's okay, I still love you, even if you can't resolve a twelfth order thaumaturgic force confliction."

"Flora, I don't even know what that is," Techna said.

"Maybe I'll tell you some time," Flora said with a mischievous smile.

"This is why I like machines," Techna grumbled. "If they don't give you the answer it's because you either didn't ask the right question or they just don't know."

"Eyes on the fire fairy," Flora said.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Techna said. "How are you doing Bloom?"

"I think I'm getting something," Bloom said. She was now glowing bright orange, filling the test chamber with light and heat.

Techna quickly checked the screens. "You're still well within reason on power, so feel free to start pushing a bit harder."

"Got it," Bloom said before returning to her task.

"Do we really need to push?" Flora asked. "Isn't this enough?"

"Maybe," Techna said. "It looks like Bloom has managed to tap into the power on her own, but..."

"Yeah," Flora said with a sigh. "Stopping now would be like stopping at the first fairy form. Useful, but a lot of wasted potential. There's no danger yet, so we should probably continue."

"We're being careful," Techna said. "If it starts looking dangerous, we'll stop."

"I know," Flora said.

"Uh, girls?" Bloom said. "I think something's happening..."

Techna glanced at the displays. "Bloom, your magic just seriously spiked! Shut it down!" she shouted. "Shut it down now!"

"I can't!" Bloom said, fear in her voice.

"Flora, can you do something?" Techna asked, desperately scrambling around the control room and adjusting sensors.

"Yeah," Flora said "Just... give it a minute."

"Flora, if we don't do something now, we're going to become a crater!" Techna said. "And that's one of the better possible outcomes!"

"I know," Flora said. "But there's something about this..."

Inside the testing chamber Bloom's magic had taken on a life of its own. Fire flowed freely from the fairy, twisting into fantastic shapes.

"Flora..." Techna said.

"Just watch," Flora said. "I think it's almost over."

"What's almost over?" Bloom asked. "What's going on?"

"You woke her up," Flora said as the fire gathered itself, forming into a solid shape. There was a flash of light, and suddenly the testing room was filled with a coiled dragon.

"Greetings, time travelers," the dragon said. Its voice was warm, comforting, and ever so slightly female. **"I am the being you know as the Great Dragon."**

There was a moment of stunned silence as the three loopers attempted to figure out which world-shaking revelation to deal with first. In the end they all came to separate conclusions.

"You're a physical entity?" Techna asked.

"You're awake?" Bloom asked.

"You know about the loops?" Flora asked.

"One at a time, please," the Great Dragon said with gentle amusement. **"Yes Techna, I am a physical being, not merely a metaphor for a primordial force. By the way, a twelfth order thaumaturgic force confliction is the method fairies use to fly."**

Techna blinked in surprise. "Uh, thank you, uh, your... What do we call you?"

"That is an interesting question," the Dragon said. **"I am many things. I am the one who created the universe. I am fire. I am magic. I am life. I have been called many things by many people. For one as old as I, it is not the name that matters, merely the identity. Call me whatever you wish, I care not."**

"Great Dragon," Bloom said in a voice of wonder. "You're awake."

"Yes, though not in the same sense that you are," she said. **"I do not repeat this cycle as you do. Time does not touch me, so its repetition does not truly include me. I am aware of the existence of your ordeal, but I am not part of it."**

"I have so many questions for you," Bloom said.

"I wish I had answers for you, dear fairy," the Dragon said. **"But you must find your own. I cannot simply give away the secrets of the universe after all. Do not be frightened, little one. You are more than worthy of the power you bear. You already have all you need, even without my powers."**

"Th- thank you," Bloom said.

"Great Dragon?" Flora asked. "I'm sorry we disturbed you."

"Do not be concerned," the Dragon said. " **I did not mind. You have a good heart, child. Much has been asked of you, but you do not resent it. Few would accept your role with such good grace."**

"Thank you," Flora said.

"Do not thank me," the Great Dragon said. **"You have earned my praise through your own actions. I can feel the weight of time on your mind, yet not its cares. You are truly a remarkable**

individual. You need only continue on the path before you and all will be well."

"Thank you," Flora said.

"My time here draws to an end," the Great Dragon said. **"It saddens me to know that fate of the world I created is no longer in my hands, but I am glad to see that it has found caretakers worthy of it."** The Dragon turned to Bloom. **"Child, should you have need of my power, in this time or any other, you need only call upon me and I will aid you. I have no more desire to see my work destroyed than you do. I know you will use this gift responsibly."**

"Of course!" Bloom said. "Thank you!"

"You are very welcome," the Great Dragon said. **"And now I take my leave. Farewell, time travelers. I will always be watching over you."** With that the Great Dragon's form dispersed back into flames and vanished.

"Well," Techna said, several minutes later. "I suppose we can call this experiment a success."

"And you've ruined the moment," Flora said.

"She said I was worthy of her power," Bloom said in a quiet voice.

"Yes, she did," Flora said. "And she was right. Let's go have lunch. I think I've had enough excitement for one loop."

Author's Notes:

Admin Space: Fand is *motivated* .

11.1: RTFM Shepard. RTFM.

11.2: I call haxx!

11.3: Dance Dance Devastation!

11.4: Welcome to the Department of Redundancy Department, Stella.

11.5: Whoosh is an adequately logical reason.

11.6: The return of Ork Flora! And Ork Techna! And... Nyan Cat? Yeah, I give up on that one.

11.7: Okay, so the new powers aren't *entirely* redundant.

11.8: Post apocalyptic world vs. Flora! Round one, figh- Oh. Well that was fast.

11.9: Bloom does not like the Dark Millennium.

11.10: OMG! Literally!

Chapter 12

12.1 (Awesomedude17)

Flora and Techna were in a middle of an argument, hiding in a walk in closet, mainly because of this fused loop with the Vortex World and YHMH deciding to go after them.

"Flora, are you sure you want to do this?"

"Techna, fallen angels are after us and they're immune to magic somehow. I've only got enough bullets for half of them, and you're the only one quick enough to cut them so that they hit more angels. Does that make sense?"

"Logically, I would rather we just use our weapons the normal way, rather than risk getting shot by my girlfriend."

Flora sighed as Naoki kicked down the door.

"What are you two doing?"

"She wants to try something possible, but dangerous." Techna said.

"It's the only option we got."

"You do realize that I already finished up, right?"

"What." The two said as they rushed out and saw piles of bodies.

"Honestly, I'd rather you not bicker, since this is only phase one."

The duo looked crestfallen after that line.

12.2 (Evilhumour)

"Oi, girl!" Bloom froze as a voice singled her out of the crowd, people stepping to the side as a towering giant of a man walked up to her. It was Sebastian Yarrick and he looked like he swallowed a large amount of lemons. "Bloom, I need to speak with you, *now.* "

With a weak shrug and a blush on her face, Bloom and the towering man went off to a corner for privacy.

Yarrick, ever without tacit in a serious and delicate moment, the man turned on her. "I came to apologize to you girl for continuously addressing you by your male counterpart name."

"What?" Bloom asked, a bit dazed by the fact he was apologizing to her.

"Your Admin made it clear to mine how hard you were finding it to adept to the Loops, and she, *your* Admin, made it quite clear that my actions of calling you Blake were in poor taste," Yarrick looked off to the side, biting his lip. "I truly am sorry Bloom, I did not mean to give more issues to deal with."

"It's okay..." Bloom cursed herself, her cursioty getting the best of her. " *How* did my Admin-"

" *Your* blasted Admin did what apparently she does best, and we will leave it at *that* , am I understood?" Yarrick snarled out, Bloom throwing her hands in defense. "Good, the less I think of that horrid written garbage, the better."

12.3 (Evilhumour)

"I *hate* our Admin!" Bloom decree caused her looping friends to rear backwards. "I was talking to Yarrick from Warhammer and he told me that his Admin gave him *this* , as a sign of how nuts our Admin is!"

With a toss, Flora caught the booklet and read the title with wide eyes and a hand going to cover her mouth instantly. Showing her

girlfriend got a similar reaction, with Stella and Musa rolling on their back in pure laughter.

"It's not funny!" Bloomed whined, looking at the Bloom Blake slash that their Admin wrote and reminding herself again to never again give Yggrdrasil that she had hope that things would stop humiliating her.

" **FENRIR YOU BLASTED WALKING CARPET, ONCE I GET MY HANDS ON YOU, YOU WILL BE ONLY BE ABLE TO HOWL IN LOW PITCHES!** " Fand roared in anger, chasing after the fleeing massive wolf who had stolen one of her private works and shown it to her loopers. " **GET BACK HERE AND FACE YOUR PUNISHMENT LIKE A MAN!"**

12.4 (Awesomedude17)

As Duke entered the chamber where a good chuck of Earth's women were at, he then got a ping again, and then noticed a woman in particular, tied up but calmly cutting herself out.

"Most women in my loop are practically eye candy that need me to rescue them because that's how my world works. You're different."

"Yeah. I'm Flora, Anchor for Alfea."

Duke grabbed the bindings and tore them off with his bare hands, then handed her a BFG 9000.

"Duke Nukem, local anchor. Now let's kill some aliens before they capture more of Earth's women."

"Why are they after Earth's women?"

"I don't know. They just do. Let's go." Duke pumped the slide of his shotgun.

One alien slaughtering later

"Well that was enlightening." Flora remarked as Duke hopped out of ruins of the spaceship they blew up.

"Yep. You know what Flora, I respect you. You're different in so many ways."

"Don't get any ideas, I'm taken, by my girlfriend."

"I've lived a long life. Do you honestly think I care for that anymore? Beside, the Commander did help me with my issues."

"Who?"

"He's a chill guy. Very pleasant guy."

"I bet."

Duke took out his gold-plated M1911 and handed it to Flora.

"A gift. Don't lose it."

Flora sighed as she took it, and pocketed it.

Kinda weird to see a womanizer not be a womanizer. Guess the loops change everyone... Maybe Bloom has hope adjusting after all...

"By the way, in about 11 years or something, there'll be another invasion. I'll need you to avoid getting into their clutches... for obvious reasons..." Duke pinched the bridge of his nose.

Flora groaned. She was so done with this loop already.

12.5 (lord Martiya)

"What." Aisha said.

There wasn't much she could say. One moment she was on Domino, dancing with Nabu, and the next she was in Magix City, with the backpack she used whenever she came in town for supplies back when she lived close to Pixie Village. A quick check revealed that the pack was empty, but she had a grocery list that could have been one of those she made for those supply runs.

There was something seriously wrong, but she couldn't guess what. She would go to Alfea, the headmistress would know.

Aisha was almost at the city limit when she met someone that shouldn't have been there. After all, the last time she had met them the Trix were being carted off to Lightrock as punishment for joining Darkar and then Valtor and breaking out from both the Omega Dimension and Lightrock itself. And they were going around as if they weren't wanted criminals. Then again, they had always been audacious ones… Still, someone had to stop them, and between her Enchantix and their madness since they had joined Valtor making them fight at less than their actual ability she could take the three sisters alone, and the road was desert. No collateral damage. So she transformed, and threw a blob of Morphix at them. One that splattered against a barrier of magical ice. And now that they were looking at her, Aisha noticed that the Trix' eyes lacked the glint of insanity they had since she had known them.

"Name and birthday, please. The other date for the gravestone is today." Icy sentenced, completely matter-of-factly.

Suddenly, Aisha wasn't so sure of her odds anymore. And why did the Trix not know who she was?!

Aisha's thoughts were interrupted when she had to raise a barrier to stop Stormy's lightning, and then dodge the tree that Darcy had telekinetically thrown at her. She stopped moving just in time to avoid the freezing wind spell Icy had aimed exactly where she was about to land, and then had to dodge again when Stormy's wind augmented the area of effect of Icy's spell. And dodge she did, right

into Darcy's telekinetic blast that pinned her on a wall. She started to counter it, but then she found herself encased in Icy's ice, completely covered except for a small area of the face. What she needed to breathe.

That too was strange. Not only the Trix had not tried to kill her (just to capture and non-lethally wound her), but they were showing a coordination they had lacked since they joined Valtor. That was something else to ask them when she had captured them.

Using one of the tricks learned in Griselda's hellish lessons, Aisha freed herself, and again she used her Morphix to capture them. This time with enough strength to shatter Icy's barrier… Right before being burned to ash.

"We should go for the maiming, I think." Stormy said, amused from the situation.

Icy nodded, Darcy raised her leg, and-

"All right, what's the deal here?"

And the Specialists showed up to break the fight. With Brandon in the lead and without Helia.

"Sky, you're here!" she called. It was faster to just talk with him than with the whole group, at least at first.

"Do we know?" Brandon replied. BRANDON.

"Specialists, I demand you arrest her at once!" Icy said. "The fairy, whoever she is, attacked us without reason!"

That was too much for Aisha's already shaken mind, and she fainted.

Aisha was in the Red Tower holding cell in which she had just woken up, thinking about what she had just discovered with a look at the

calendar outside: somehow, she had travelled back in time of over three years. It was impossible… Yet it explained everything. Over three years ago, she was living close to Pixie Village in what she could now admit was an act of teenage rebellion against her father. Over three years ago, the Trix were honour students at Cloudtower, effectively inseparable, and sane. And over three years ago, Helia was a drop-out and Sky and Brandon had switched identities due some political mess-up on Heraklyon (they, Bloom and Flora knew, but the most she had ever got from them were Bloom's mutterings about ruined childhood).

"Good, you're awake now." the guard said. It was a rather bored Riven. "Now, the Trix, that's the name of those three witches, have pressed charges, and I'm arresting you. I'm reading you the rights as soon as I find the card…"

Riven did just that, and Aisha realized she had a way out: the phone call. After all, if she couldn't take her out who could?

Flora answered at her phone call as she was about to leave Alfea with her (Awake, all of them) friends for the usual fight with the Trix, wondering what the unscheduled event was about. They hadn't even decided if it was a Friendly Trix Loop yet or not…

"Hello? Flora's speaking." she said.

" *This is Aisha, princess of Andros. I know how it sounds, but I just travelled back in time, and…"*

"Aisha, I'm a time traveller too. Where are you?"

" *Cloudtower's holding cells. The Trix are pressing charges on me for assaulting them. THE TRIX."*

Flora pinched her nose. First Musa's Awakening had been what it had been, now Aisha went and got herself arrested upon Awakening.

She dearly hoped Darcy would never start Looping, for if the pattern held… Better not to think about it.

12.5 cont. (Firehawk242)

"So," Aisha said, looking at the assembled Winx. "Loops."

"Yup," Stella said.

"And how long has this been going for?" Aisha asked.

The other fairies turned to look at Flora. "...I don't know," Flora said. "I'm still a young looper, I wasn't there when it started. You'd have to ask one of the Original Seven, but I doubt even they could tell you. Maybe an Admin could help, but I'm not sure I want to know."

"How long have you been..." Aisha looked for the right word.

"Looping?" Flora asked. "...I don't know that either. It's been a very long time though."

"Flora's the Anchor," Bloom said. "She's the only person from this loop who's Awake for all of the loops."

"Flora..." Aisha said in a small voice. "How old *are* you?"

"I don't know," Flora said sadly. "Not for certain. But if I had to guess... Maybe five million years? Give or take a few hundred thousand?"

Aisha fell back onto her bed with a muffled thump. "Five... million?"

"I think?" Flora said. "I don't really keep count any more."

"Of course you don't," Aisha said, dazed. "Why would you?"

"Aisha, are you alright?" Bloom asked.

"Fine," the newborn looper said, her voice acquiring an oddly high pitch. "Just fine. I just found out my friends are immortal time travelers who are older than Magix. Why wouldn't I be fine?"

"Aisha," Flora said. "Just because we're loopers doesn't change who we are. You're still one of us. You always have been, and always will be."

"Yeah," Musa said. "We're your friends, and nothing can change that."

"We've been waiting a long time for you to start looping," Techna said. "We're glad to see you again."

"Yeah!" Stella said. "We're so glad you're Awake!"

"We're together again," Bloom said. "All six of us."

Aisha stared at her friends, tears threatening to escape her control as her friends effortlessly dashed her greatest fears. She was back with her friends. She was not alone, and never would be again. She looked around the circle of fairies with a watery smile. "Thanks, girls," she said.

"Then let's make it official!" Musa said, holding out her hand. "The Winx Club is back together, now in its looping version!"

"Yeah!" Stella said, placing her hand on top of Musa's. "Winx forever!"

"Winx forever," Flora said.

"Forever," Techna agreed. The two fairies placed their hands on top of Stella's.

"Loops or not, we're still the Winx," Bloom said, placing her left hand atop Techna's. "And you're one of us, Aisha."

Aisha slowly walked over and placed her hand on Bloom's. "Winx Club forever," she said with a smile.

12.6

"Your mission, SPARTAN, is to defeat the Covenant forces on the planet below. Do you have any questions?"

"Yes," Flora said. "Why must I wind up in EVERY loop involving guns?!"

12.7

"Soooo," Bloom said, wandering into the Winx rooms. "Mitzi's Halloween party is coming up again..."

"And you want to go," Techna said, not even bothering to look up from the small robot she was building. She wasn't entirely sure what the robot was supposed to *do* exactly, but she was bored and felt like making something. She'd find a use for it eventually. She always did.

"I was thinking we should all go," Bloom said. "For old times' sake."

"Why?" Stella asked. "It wasn't really that much fun, and Mitzi's a jerk."

"Plus there's the outside chance that the loops will make that thing about the three sisters real," Musa said. "Again."

"Or the Trix could just show up," Aisha said. "It wouldn't exactly be a surprise."

"I know," Bloom said. "But it's a costume party and I do have an open invitation..."

"You want to play dress-up," Flora said with a slight giggle.

"So what if I do?" Bloom said, ever-so-slightly defensively.

"Then that sounds like something I can get behind," Stella said, her interest piqued. "Who are we going as?"

"Well," Bloom said. "I was thinking we could freak Mitzi out by going as our scariest loop identities. I've got some power armor from my visits to the Imperium of Man. It'll need a little work to be usable as a costume, but I think it should work."

"I guess I'll be going as myself then," Flora said. "My vampire side's pretty scary."

"I think I could do something with that time I was a cyborg," Techna said. "I might be able to work a little firebending into it as well..."

"I don't really have an obviously scary looping persona," Musa said. "I think I'll go as a TSAB enforcer though. Gotta put that loop dealing with Nanoha 'Divine Buster' Takamachi to good use."

"Is Divine Buster really her middle name?" Aisha asked.

"No," Flora said.

" *Yes* ," Musa said emphatically. Flora looked at her. "Well it *should* be," Musa grumbled, relenting.

"Anyways," Stella said. "I don't really have a scary loop look yet, unless you count my time replacing Bella Swan."

The six girls shuddered in perfect symphony.

"That's scary for all the wrong reasons," Bloom said. "And not a good look for you either."

"Exactly, which is why I'm not going as it," Stella said. "I was thinking I'd go as that monster Chimera turned me into."

There was a moment of silence.

"That would be a *costume* ," Stella said. "I'm not going to actually turn myself into that hideous thing again!"

"Okay, that makes more sense," Bloom said. "What about you Aisha?"

"Good question," Aisha said. "I don't really have any loop identities yet. I could just go in fairy form, but we already did that."

"Go as the Princess of Andros!" Stella said. "I can even design the costume for you!"

"Sure," Aisha said. "That should work."

"Then we're all decided," Bloom said. "Let's go to the party!"

"Bloom?" Mitzi said, looking up, and up, and up to finally encounter Bloom's face some seven feet off the ground.

"Yep!" Bloom said. "How's it going Mitzi?"

"What *are* you?" Mitzi asked.

"A soldier from forty thousand years in the future!" Bloom said. "I don't think you've met my friends yet. They want to thank you for inviting us."

"Hi," Aisha said in full court regalia. "I'm Aisha."

"A princess," Mitzi said. "Really, is that the best you can do?"

"No, but I didn't want to embarrass you by going in a fancier costume," Aisha said.

Mitzi recoiled slightly, stung. "And what's this ugly thing?"

"My name's Stella," Stella said. "And it's supposed to be ugly. It's a reversed version of the Princess and the Frog."

"Right," Mitzi said. "And this is?"

"Musa," Musa said. "I'm an alien cop."

"...right," Mitzi said.

"I'm Techna," Techna said, half her face covered with metal and machinery.

Mitzi reeled back, shocked by the effect. It looked so real...

"And I'm her girlfriend, Flora," Flora said, melting out of the shadows. Mitzi took one look at Flora's vampire form and went pale.

"Nice- nice to meet you," Mitzi said weakly. "I'll just... go and get some more punch..." She turned and left, beating a hasty retreat.

"She seems nice," Musa said sardonically.

12.8 (lord Martiya)

It had been a Baseline Loop, and once again Mitzi had invited the Winx at her Halloween party. While the girls were still wondering why Bloom had nearly ran away screaming when the self-proclaimed "best doctor in town" had hit on her, they were listening to Mitzi's attempt at pranking them with that made-up story about three witch sisters.

Then the wall behind Mitzi exploded.

"Give us the Codex!" Icy shouted as she and her sisters barged in.

"Not me, this time." Bloom stated.

"Me neither." Musa added.

"I DID think about it, but it was too easy…" Stella declared.

"Actually, it was me." Aisha admitted. Then, seeing her companions' surprise, she explained: "She's just too insufferable, and that story about three sisters was just asking for it…"

"YOU THINK YOU CAN FOOL US AND GET AWAY WITH IT?!" Icy bellowed after listening them.

"Give us one reason why we shouldn't kill you right now." Darcy threatened.

"Mitzi's a bully to her younger sister." Bloom deadpanned.

"Right, more urgent things to take care of." Darcy said as her own sisters turned to Mitzi and changed her in a pumpkin. "Say, how do you make a pumpkin cake?"

Mitzi's home was thrashed by the fight to save her. A useless one, given the Trix never actually wanted to eat someone so distasteful…

12.9 (lord Martiya)

It was a new Loop, and as she looked around Bloom realized she wasn't in Alfea. In fact, it looked like Cloudtower.

"Sisters, any idea on how we can take that ring in spite of Knut's failure?" Darcy asked.

Bloom blinked, and noticed she was with Darcy and Stormy. No Icy in sight. Then her Loop memories hit her. SHE was in Icy's place. As she realized that, she enacted the only sensible option.

"What was that?" Icy timidly asked to her new school mates.

"Sounded like a scream…" the Unawake Tecna replied.

Flora didn't say anything. She was too busy laughing hysterically to notice the scream or the desperate Pings from Bloom.

12.10 (Awesomedude17)

"So, basically, we're in a world where everyone, even the children are armed to the teeth, and you have to kill, quote, 'Badasses', unquote, to survive?"

"Pretty much. Pretzels?" An Awake Handsome Jack offered to his secretary, who Flora replaced.

"Is there anything else to know here?"

"Vault Hunters, they search Pandora and Elpis to find vaults containing cool shit like guns, and ancient demonic monsters that'll kill everyone on this planet, easy."

"HOW DO YOU LIVE LIKE THIS?!"

"Easy, be a dick." Jack tossed his pretzel at an intern.

"Hey, pick that up or I'll punish you for littering and hang you over a bunch of sharks with lasers on the top of their... Wait... We don't have that? Mutant sea bass? Fine, use that instead. Thank you for picking that up." Jack activated a trapdoor, sending the intern down to the sea bass tank.

"See?"

Flora folded her arms.

"Can I turn in my two weeks notice?"

Flora was tending to one of her more exotic plants when Techna opened the door to the room they shared.

"Flora, have you seen my phone?" Techna asked. "I haven't been able to find it all day."

"Not recently," Flora said. "Don't you have trackers on your things?"

"Not on my in-loop phones," Techna said. "That's more trouble than it's worth. Usually."

"Well, maybe you should retrace your steps?" Flora suggested.

"I suppose that's probably the best plan," Techna said, heading back towards the door before pausing. "Would you mind calling it? It might be in the room."

"Sure," Flora said, pulling out her own phone and hitting speed-dial. A sudden, muffled ringing filled the room.

"It sounds like it's coming from over there," Techna said, pointing at one of the movable racks Flora kept her plants on. "Maybe it's under the shelf?" She pushed the thing aside, its wheels rolling smoothly across the floor.

"Did you find it?" Flora asked.

"No, but I could swear I heard it ringing over here," Techna said. "Could you call it again please?"

"Of course," Flora said, dialing again. The muffled ringing was back.

"It sounds like it's coming from the rack again," Techna muttered. "Did I leave it on the rack for some reason?" She pushed the plant rack back to its original location and began sifting through the plants, most of which were downright odd. "I still don't see it. Could you call it one more time?"

Flora dialed.

Techna stared at one of the plants. "No way," she muttered in disbelief as she stared at the Linphean variation of a Venus Flytrap. Which was now ringing faintly. "There's no way."

"What?" Flora asked.

"Flora," Techna said. "Your plant ate my phone."

"I... guess it was hungry?" Flora said, struggling to keep a straight face.

"It ate my *phone* ," Techna said in disbelief. "My *phone.* "

"Maybe it needed more iron in its diet?" Flora suggested, a faint giggle emerging.

"A plant. Ate. My. Phone," Techna said. "My phone."

"Yes, yes it did," Flora said, finally succumbing to the giggles. "A plant ate your phone."

Techna stared at the plant as her girlfriend collapsed into a giggle fit. A faint smile began to tug at the corner of her mouth. "A plant ate my phone. Well, I think that's a new one. And... Yeah, that's actually pretty funny," she said with a laugh. "Now we just need to figure out how to get it out of there."

Admin Space - Fand's Office

Fand stared at her screen as she scrolled through the code in front of her for what was quite literally the thirtieth time, looking for even the slightest error. When none were evident, she sat back in her chair and sighed. "I think that's as good as it's going to get," the fey Admin said.

"What you've got is very impressive," Frigg said from the seat next to Fand. "I've seen less remarkable code in activation attempts. I've certainly never seen anyone put this much thought and work into a simple expansion of an already existing loop."

"I know," Fand said. "I just can't shake the feeling that I've missed something big and the whole thing is going crash."

"You haven't missed anything," Frigg said. "You've reviewed it dozens of times, I've looked over it half a dozen times, and you even had Hephaestus go over it for you a couple of times. Even if you'd somehow missed some enormous error, we'd have caught it. It's ready Fand."

"I know," Fand said. She sat up straight again and started typing. "Alright, let's get this online. Loading patch. Inserting into loop primary code at paradox axis point. How's it look so far?"

"Good," Frigg said. "It looks like Yggdrasil's integrated the patch into the loop. You can barely tell it's not part of the original code."

"That's a relief," Fand said. "Alright, I think that's it. It should go online for the next loop."

"Congratulations Fand," Frigg said. "When I first saw this, I thought you were being silly, but you've done something remarkable here. You should be proud."

"Thanks, Frigg," Fand said. "Thank you for everything. Now I just have to explain to my loopers what this means for them."

"I'm sure they'll listen to you," Frigg said. "You have rather cooperative loopers."

"I take it Nanoha crashed your loop again?" Fand asked.

"If I ever make it through a shift where she doesn't crash the loop at least once, it'll be a miracle," Fand said. "Her Eiken loop should be ending soon, so I need to get back to my station. Congratulations on getting the rest of your loop online."

"Thank you, Frigg," Fand said.

Author's Notes:

12.1: It shames me to admit that I've never beaten a Shin Megami Tensei game. Granted, I've only played one of them, but still...

12.2: Fand is best admin!

12.3: ...or not...

12.4: Flora, your girlfriend was straight in baseline, and both of you were dating other people. You don't get to be surprised by people changing because of the loops.

12.5: And Aisha Awakens! The whole gang's here now!

12.6: That is good question. One Flora won't like the answer to.

12.7: Mitzi, Mitzi, Mitzi.

12.8: ...Priorities?

12.9: I don't want to know what happened next. And I'm fairly certain neither does Bloom.

12.10: I don't have good description for this. Handsome Jack is a jerk. There. That's all I got.

12.11: Inspired by the story of a farmer who found his lost phone when his cow started ringing.

Admin Space: Big things are coming next chapter! Big things indeed!

Chapter 13

13.1

A lazy Sunday morning dawned to find the Winx lounging around in their rooms, chatting.

"So you can put *anything* in the Subspace Pocket?" Aisha asked.

"Pretty much," Musa said. "I mean it has to actually *fit* and it can't be an independently looping object, but as long as you obey those rules, you can put whatever you want in it. What did you have in mind?"

"I was thinking about stuffing a Windrider in there," Aisha said. "It would be useful to have the next time I Awaken in Shadowhaunt. Maybe a JX7?"

"The JX7's good Windrider for a baseline machine, but you seriously need to check out the one Techna built a while back when she was bored," Musa said. "Three times as fast, steers even better than your wings, and supposedly is inter-realm capable."

"Really?" Aisha asked. "No kidding, tell me more."

"I wonder if I can store copies of my ring in my pocket," Stella said. "It could be fun."

"Maybe," Bloom said. "But don't you usually have it in fused loops?"

"Oh, yeah!" Stella said. "I never really noticed, but that's not normal, is it?"

"Nope," Bloom said. "Probably means it's soulbound to you. Good news, you can't lose it, bad news, you can't keep copies in your pocket."

"I wish some of my things were soulbound," Flora said. "It's annoying when I have to pack up all of my projects and shove them in my pocket every three years."

"Agreed," Techna said. "Three years might sound like a lot, but for some of things I'm working on, I really need more time."

There was a sudden flash of light as Fand appeared in the room. "Did someone ask for more time?" Fand asked cheekily.

"Fand," Flora said respectfully. "It's a pleasure to see you again."

"Flora, who is that?" Aisha asked.

"Oh, sorry, you wouldn't know," Flora said. "Girls, this is Fand, our branch's Admin."

"You're the one who wrote that... thing about me?!" Bloom demanded.

Fand cringed slightly. "That wasn't supposed to leave my computer! Fenrir showed it to you without my permission!"

"And that makes it better?!" Bloom demanded.

"You shouldn't take it personally, Bloom," Flora said. "Fand does that with everyone."

"True!" Fand said.

Bloom considered for a moment, then fixed Fand with a death glare before returning to her seat.

"Why are you here?" Techna asked. "We don't really see you unless it's something important."

"I have good news for you!" Fand said. "Well, mostly."

"Define 'mostly'," Musa said.

"Well, let's start with the good news," Fand said. "You know those later seasons of the hub version of your loop?"

"You got them working?" Techna said.

"Yes," Fand said. "And no. That's where the mostly comes in."

"How bad is it?" Flora asked.

"It's not bad, mostly just weird," Fand said. "I already explained this to Flora and Techna, but this loop has two possible baselines, both of which are damaged, and one of which divides again further down the line."

"You didn't tell us about that last part," Techna said.

"I didn't?" Fand said. "I was pretty sure I did. Oh well, moving on! Both baselines are damaged to some extent, and I'm uncertain how safe you would be going through the less damaged version unprotected, so I-"

"Get to the point," Bloom growled.

"The rest of your loop is active, but what exactly happens is rather variable," Fand said quickly. "There's a very minimalist baseline with a selection of events which may or may not happen, some of which are mutually exclusive."

"So we might actually have an event-free year?" Musa asked.

"Yes," Fand said. "Oh, and just a warning, I fixed the worst of the glitches, but I couldn't get them all. Some of them are going to take me a long time to fix."

"What should we keep an eye out for?" Aisha asked.

"I'm not sure yet," Fand admitted. "I'm still working on it. Oh, and there is some pretty serious corruption in your personality files for those later parts of the loop, but! I made a patch to prevent you from

being affected by it. It only works on your looping selves though, so if you're not Awake, you will be affected by it. Not that you'll notice, or remember."

"So when does this longer loop start?" Stella asked.

"Now!" Fand said. "Welcome to your first seven-year loop!"

13.2 (lord Martiya)

"Girls, we all know who's my favourite foe in our home universe, but who's yours?" Musa asked.

"Diaspro." Stella AND Aisha replied together.

"I'm sorry... Did you just say the name of the jeweled RAPIST?" Bloom asked them.

"Bloom, she likely thinks that YOU are a gold digger." Aisha explained.

"What."

"Let me explain this, Aisha. Got more time to think about it." Stella interjected. "Diaspro grew up with Sky, and in Eraklyon absurd political situation she was one of the few people trusted with knowing his real face. She always knew he has a tendency to not think things through, and was raised to be the mind behind the throne while Sky looks good and kills Yoshinoya. That's also why she told Sky to leave Red Tower and let the others die for him during the Trix' attack: if he died there Eraklyon would have lost the heir to the throne, and who knows what would have happened.

"Then you show up and attack her out of the blue. At first she thought you were just a hyperprotective friend with a crush on him, and that's why she didn't press charges. But after the mess with the Trix and the Dragon's Flame she finds out that Sky has broken up

and wants to marry you, who just happen to be the princess from Domino. If I were in her shoes and didn't know you as I do, I'd immediately accept the princess part because THE Faragonda says it's true, and think you want to live what people think is a princess' life and brainwashed Sky for it. Between that, Sky refusing being checked for brainwashing, and the frustration from knowing she won't ever get the Enchantix she needs to break the brainwashing by herself, she grew desperate... And Valtor showed up with an untraceable love potion. She thought she was the hero and you the villain, and that she was using another villain to save her world before turning on him."

"What she said." Aisha confirmed.

The other Winx looked at them, surprised at the explanation. And that it made sense.

"Still doesn't excuse her from setting those clowns on us." Bloom declared.

Everyone shuddered. Once in a while Diaspro would hire some hitmen to try and kill Bloom, but the Patchamen... They were just too annoying to tolerate.

"And yours, girls?" Musa asked the three remaining Winx, curious about them too.

"Believe it or not, Darkar." Bloom admitted, surprising the others. "It's just that he was, well... Clean. He had a goal and went for it, no pointless dog-kicking or anything if not by accident." she explained, knowing the undertones of the table he had put her on before the second bout of brainwashing and that Darkar hadn't thought of that. That Loop it had been pointed out he had even apologized... Before trying to kill them. "Even when he betrayed the Trix he did it because he expected them to do the same... And frankly, I think he was right."

"Mine's Ogron." Tecna said, looking anywhere but at the glaring Aisha. "Before coming to Alfea and the Loops I had to deal with the

intellectual inferiority of my peers back on Zenith, and he had Duman. I can sympathize with that."

Not even Aisha, whose loathing for the Black Circle was almost as great as Darcy's for Tritannus, could object to that. Duman's stupidity was just too great... And Ogron had to live with him.

"My favourite enemy is Stormy. If nothing else because she's the one who doesn't hold grudges for long unless Lightrock is involved, and doesn't go for the mind games." Flora said. Then she realized one thing: "Funny... I almost expected one of us to say she favoured Icy..."

"Flora, didn't she actually consider kidnapping your sister for blackmail?" Tecna pointed out.

"And her sisters were surprised when she decided it was too low. Still... I expected one of us to favour Icy. I don't know why."

"It's because she's the most despicable." Bloom said. "Don't ask me how it works, it just happens with everyone but Umbridge."

13.3

Flora sat with the rest of the Winx at the Fruity Music Bar after a long day of work at their pet store. She looked around and caught sight of the rather harried-looking magenta-haired waitress rushing back and forth to deliver various orders. This would be the third time the loop had included Roxy, and the first time Flora was the only one Awake for it.

Flora considered the various ways she could resolve the situation. She could just let events play out like they did in the show, but somehow that didn't appeal. Flailing about aimlessly for a while before getting involved in a severe confrontation really wasn't something she enjoyed. There was also something to be said for convincing Roxy to believe fairies existed without the threat of

Wizards of the Black Circle hanging over her. Honestly, it was pretty remarkable that actually worked to trigger the Believix transformation, given how forced it was. So that option was off the table then.

With that out of the way, Flora set about figuring out how to convince Roxy herself. The simplest answer would be to just use her Believix powers to more or less force her to believe, but after her time in the loops, Flora found that particular idea repulsive. It smacked of certain kinds of mind control she'd seen, and she refused to use it. Ironic that she'd find one of her fairy powers more unsettling than the ones her vampiric form granted her, but there it was. The next possible solution would be to simply transform in front of Roxy, but for some reason Flora found herself less than satisfied with that solution, at least as an opener. Better to ease Roxy into things instead of simply throwing all at her at once. She'd transform once she needed evidence to back up her claims.

That meant Flora had to talk to her.

"Hey Flora!" Musa said. "Whatchya thinking about?"

"Huh?" Flora said, snapping out of her thoughts.

"You were just staring off into space," Bloom said. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine, thank you," Flora said. "I was just lost in thought."

"Well it's a good thing we found you again!" Stella said brightly. "We were just talking about going back to the store for the night."

"Right," Flora said. "Actually, you girls go without me. There's something I want to do before heading back."

"What is it?" Techna asked. "Do you want help?"

"No thank you," Flora said. "I'd rather do this by myself. Don't worry, I'll go back soon."

"Flora, I'm not sure you should be out on your own with the Wizards of the Black Circle on the loose," Aisha said.

"I'll be fine," Flora said. "Trust me, I can take care of myself."

"If you're certain..." Aisha said.

"I'm sure," Flora said with a smile. "It won't take too long."

"We'll be waiting for you at home, then," Bloom said. "Let's go, Winx."

"Miss, the bar's closing in five minutes," Roxy said to the woman with the long brown hair who'd been sitting at her table all night.

"Thank you, but I actually wanted to talk to you about something," the woman said, smiling at Roxy. "I didn't want to interrupt your work though, so I figured I should wait until after."

"What do you want to talk to me about?" Roxy asked suspiciously.

"A few things," Flora said. "Trust me, it's important."

"Why should I talk to you?" Roxy asked, still suspicious.

"Because you're not who you think you are," Flora said. "That, and I know who your mother is."

Roxy blinked. "You... You know who my mom is?"

"You don't remember her, do you?" Flora asked. "Your father doesn't either. You don't even have any pictures of her."

"How do you know that?" Roxy asked.

"It's complicated," Flora said. "I can explain, but I'd rather do it all at once, rather than in small pieces."

"Right," Roxy said. "If you want to talk to me, you're going to have to talk to my father too."

"That's reasonable," Flora said. "He deserves to know as well."

"Can you wait here?" Roxy asked.

"Aren't I already?" Flora said with a smile.

"Good point!" Roxy laughed. "Alright, we have to close up, but once that's done we'll be over to talk."

"That's all I ask," Flora said.

"Roxy says you have something to tell us," Klaus said, sitting across the table from the young woman in front of him. He didn't really have time for this. He had a dining area to clean, and he couldn't do that until she left. Still, Roxy said it was important, so he would make an exception.

"Yes," Flora said. "I know who your wife and Roxy's mother is."

That got Klaus's attention. "I'm... not married," he said.

"You are," Flora said. "You just don't remember it."

"I think I'd remember being married," Klaus said.

"Do you remember Roxy's mother?" Flora asked.

"I- no," Klaus said. "How do you know that?"

"That is a complicated story in and of itself, which I'll save for another time," Flora said. "What's more important right now is that I know who she is, where she is, and what she is."

"You know 'what' she is?" Roxy asked. "You're making it sound like she's not human."

"That's because she's not," Flora said. "Or at least, not entirely. And neither are you, Roxy."

"That's enough," Klaus said. "This is ridiculous."

"Just a moment," Flora said. "Roxy, you have an ability to commune with animals, don't you?"

"Yes," Roxy said. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"It's because of what you are," Flora said. "You are a fairy. The fairy of animals to be specific. You are Princess Roxy of Earth, and the last Earth Fairy still free."

"Get out," Klaus said. "I don't know who you are, but you're obviously insane. Fairies aren't real."

"I suppose that means I don't exist then," Flora said. "You still have to clean, right?"

"What are you-" Klaus began.

"I figure I should save you some time, since you decided to listen to me," Flora said, her hand starting to glow a light green. Around them, garbage left behind by customers began to float into the air, then flow into the trash can. In a matter of moments, the place was clean. "Ah, much better," Flora said.

"What was that?" Roxy asked.

"Magic," Flora said. "It's not a hard spell to learn, if you're interested. Now, back to our conversation. Roxy, you are a fairy. I know you are for several reasons, one of which is because I'm a fairy too."

"If you're really a fairy," Klaus said, "prove it."

"As you wish," Flora said. She stood and transformed into her Enchantix form. "How's that?"

"It's... you're beautiful," Roxy said. "Am I really like you?"

"Yes," Flora said. "You're a fairy too. I can teach you to transform and grow your own wings too."

"Mom... Mom was a fairy?" Roxy asked.

"She still is," Flora said. "Roxy, your mother is Morgana, the queen of the Earth Fairies."

"Then where is she?" Roxy asked.

"Imprisoned," Flora said. "The Wizards of the Black Circle stole her power along with that of every other fairy from Earth, and sealed them all away. She's still alive though, and we can rescue her."

"Just the two of us?" Roxy asked.

"Not quite," Flora said. "My friends are fairies too, and their boyfriends are pretty good fighters as well. We won't be alone."

"So, assuming I believe you..." Roxy said.

"Then tomorrow I introduce you to my friends, and we get to work on rescuing your mother, teaching you magic, and defeating the Wizards of the Black Circle," Flora said. She returned to her civilian form. "I'll see you tomorrow, Roxy."

"Y-yeah, see you tomorrow," Roxy said.

Flora walked into Love & Pet shortly before eleven.

"You're back," the unAwake Techna said. "Did you achieve what you were trying to do?"

"Yes," Flora said. "I found the Earth Fairy, and we're going to meet her tomorrow."

Techna stared for a moment, unable to formulate a meaningful response. She finally gave up and simply said, "Well, that was fast."

"I know," Flora said. "I'm going to bed now. Wake me up if anything important happens."

"I'll...do that," Techna said.

13.4 (lord Martiya)

Bloom's mood was just horrible. A first year almost killing one of her friends and framing another first year was bad enough, but this Loop she had just suffered an attempt on her life by Diaspro's hitmen... This time the Patchamen AND Rachel from Cloudtower. As if the Patchamen alone weren't annoying enough...

So, when the Wizards of the Black Circle attacked she just wasn't in the mood to let them do their thing and absorb attacks from fairy magic. And launched a powerful fire attack... And disintegrated them. Without Believix.

"But... They were invulnerable to fairy magic!" Faragonda exclaimed, having recognized the aggressors just in time.

"I used the magic to generate fire as hot as the surface of a sun. They were invulnerable to that... But not to the heat." Bloom explained. "Please excuse me, I need a good night of sleep."

13.5 (lord Martiya)

The Black Circle Wizards stood in Alfea's courtyard, safe in their knowledge of invulnerability to fairy magic. Then they were squished by a large bed.

"Girls, this is how you deal with opponents immune to your magic: you use magic on something else in a creative way, such as my

telekinesis on my bed." Stella explained. "Note to self: get lessons from Darcy at earliest opportunity."

"Didn't think Stella would do that..." Flora commented.

"Still cleaner than that time Aisha poured Morph-" Tecna started, only to shudder at the memory of what an UNAWAKE Aisha did them when Nabu got killed at their opening attack...

13.6

Flora was having a bad loop. Friendly Trix disasters, Darkar being even more annoying than usual, Diaspro being unusually stubborn and vindictive, and most recently Valtor's flat out refusal to actually die had left her with a very short temper. Thus why her response to seeing the Wizards of the Black Circle attacking Bloom was to stalk over to stand between the four wizards and her friend.

"Get out," Flora said. "I have had a very bad three years and I am in no mood to deal with you four. Leave now, before I hurt you."

"Flora, they're immune to fairy magic!" Bloom said.

"Listen to your friend, girl," Ogron said in his usual mocking tones. "You can't defeat us."

"I warned you," Flora said. She closed her eyes and her body erupted into an enormous formless mass of shadow. "I gave you an out. But some people just won't listen." Flora's voice echoed from within the darkness.

The four wizards had just enough time to stare in mingled shock and horror before being engulfed by the power of Flora's vampiric side.

13.7

Flora and Techna lay side by side on a blanket spread across Gardenia's beach, the ocean making a soft rumble as it swept in and out. The stars glittered overhead, decorating the moonless night sky. A warm summer breeze swept in off the ocean, gentle with the promise of beautiful day tomorrow. Flora slowly shifted her hand to find Techna's, tenderly entwining her fingers with her girlfriend's.

"It's nice when the loops decide not to give us anything to do for a few years, isn't it?" Flora asked.

"It is nice to have free time that we don't have to earn," Techna said. "There is something to be said for excitement, but I've had my fill for now. Peace and quiet is a nice change."

"I can certainly agree with that," Flora said. "Earth really is beautiful, isn't it?"

"It's more diverse than most of the other realms," Techna said. "There's more to see, more to do. And some of it really is beautiful."

"I want to see all of it someday," Flora said. "See everything there is to see on Earth."

"That sounds like fun," Techna said.

"Not really," Flora said. "I forgot the most important part. I want to see it all with you."

"I want to see it all too," Techna said, shifting slightly closer to Flora. "But why stop at just Earth? Earth is beautiful, but there are thousands of realms out there, and we do have an eternity. And that's not even counting other loops. Let's see them together."

"I'd like that," Flora said, shifting and snuggling up to the taller girl. "I'd love to see the worlds with you. All of the worlds."

"Then let's do it," Techna said. "We can start with Earth this loop. Maybe it'll take a while, but we have all the time in the multiverse."

The two fairies lay in silence for a while, simply enjoying each other's company. Just being together made everything better.

Techna suddenly gave a tiny laugh. "Who would have thought I'd end up like this?"

"Oh?" Flora asked.

"Oh yes," Techna said with genuine humor. "A girl who can't take her nose away from a screen, one who has physical intimacy issues, and one who had a very hard time getting over the idea of being in a relationship with another girl. That was me. And now look at me. Curled up with my wonderful girlfriend on a beach at night, talking about plans to tour the multiverse together."

"And you're dating the fairy of nature," Flora said cheekily. "Has your family disowned you yet?"

"I don't know if they've gotten around to it this loop," Techna said warmly. "I don't care. You're worth it."

"I love you, Techna," Flora said. "I want to spend the rest of my life, the rest of my lives with you. I want to be with you forever."

"I love you too, Flora," Techna said, wrapping her arms around the girl who was her Anchor in more ways than one. "I'll love you forever."

13.8 (lord Martiya)

Flora was looking at the scene in shock. Most of the Winx, all Awake, were looking at the scene in shock, the only exception being Bloom. Who was too busy trying to not choke herself to death due excessive laughter to be shocked. On the other hand, Roxy was shocked in her place.

"Dad... What-but-how?" she asked.

"Well, when they broke in I was scared, but then the ugly one talked about hurting you, the Winchester was there and loaded with rock salt, and they laughed when I grabbed it." Klaus replied.

The Winx (minus Bloom, who was still laughing) looked at the Black Circle Wizards, on the ground in too much pain even to groan. Then Aisha kicked them on the wounds, and everything went back to almost normal.

13.9

"Good. This is definitely better," said the woman who had crashed the Winx's performance at the Fruity Music Bar. All around her, vines had grown up out of the earth and every human in the bar had been knocked unconscious by the magical pollen she'd scattered. The enormous wings coming from her back betrayed her nature as a fairy, and a powerful one at that.

"Who are you?" Flora asked, preempting any tiresome grandstanding. Flora had seen more than enough pointless posturing during her time in the loops, and if she was given the opportunity to avoid seeing any more, she would be only to happy to take it.

"I am Diana, the Major Fairy of Nature," Diana said, somewhat disgruntled by Flora's abrupt greeting. "Who are you, little fairy?"

"Flora," Flora said. "Guardian Fairy of Nature. Leave these people alone."

"They're humans," Diana said. "They betrayed us when the Wizards attacked. More than that, they have betrayed Nature herself! If you were truly a fairy of Nature as you say, you would understand why the humans must pay for their treachery!"

"I don't think so," Flora said, shifting into her familiar Enchantix form. "Humans are a part of nature too, and you should understand that."

"Liar!" Diana shouted. "You're just like them! So be it! You will share in their punishment!" She stomped her foot and vines erupted from the ground, reaching for Flora.

"Your understanding of Nature is incomplete," Flora said, her hands glowing. "As is your understanding of magic." Around her, the vines recoiled, slinking back into the ground, vanishing as though they were never there.

"I am the Major Fairy of Nature!" Diana cried. "I AM Nature!" Additional vines lashed out at Flora.

"You represent one aspect of Nature," Flora said, advancing on sandal heels as Diana's attacks dissolved around her. "Plants are all you understand. There is more to the world than your powers."

"How are you doing this?" Diana asked, taking a step back in fear at the other fairy's relentless advance. Everything she threw at the girl simply stopped, as if Nature itself was rebelling against harming her.

"I am the Guardian Fairy of Nature," Flora said, her magic flowing out of her in glowing nimbus. "I protect and nurture Nature, and in return it defends and empowers me. You will renounce your war with the humans. You will return to your home. And you will inform Morgana and Nebula that their war is over too."

"How?" Diana said, staring at the fairy who was displaying power that positively dwarfed her own. "How can any Nature Fairy be stronger than me?"

"There is much you have left to learn," Flora said. "Return to your home. It has need of its protector."

"I... I understand," Diana said, her voice shaky. "I will return to the Amazon."

"And your war with the humans?" Flora asked.

"I bow to your understanding of Nature," Diana said. "I renounce my war against them. I shall return to my duties as the Earth's Major Fairy of Nature."

"Farewell, Diana," Flora said. The Major Fairy drifted into the sky and vanished.

"Well," Techna said, picking her way through the clutter to stand by her girlfriend. "That was impressive."

"Thanks," Flora said. "It was nice to get a chance to use my full power for a change, rather than having to hide it."

Behind her, Roxy was staring at Flora with wide eyes. "Are you ALL that powerful?"

13.10

"Flora, do you have a minute?" Techna asked.

"Of course," Flora said. "What is it?"

"You used your Enchantix form in your confrontation with Diana last loop," Techna said. "I was wondering why you didn't use any of our higher level transformations."

"...I don't know," Flora said. "Enchantix just felt right for some reason."

"You almost always use Enchantix," Techna pressed. "You never use any of our other forms if you can avoid it."

"It's what I'm most comfortable with," Flora said. "Why are you so interested in this?"

"I'm not sure yet," Techna said. "But there's something I'd like to test out with you."

"Okay..." Flora said, bemused.

"Okay, that's good!" Techna said, glancing up from her screens. "I've got the baseline readings now."

Flora nodded, transitioning back from her Enchantix to her civilian form. "What did you find?" Flora asked.

"Nothing yet," Techna said, then immediately corrected herself. "Okay, that's not quite true. I have once again confirmed that you are an amazingly powerful fairy, but we already knew that."

Flora giggled. "What next?"

"I need you to transform into your Believix form and run through the drill again," Techna said.

"Got it," Flora said. "Believix!" The new form washed over her, leaving behind the outfit and unusually large wings of the Believix transformation. Flora didn't really like those wings personally. They were awkward, and made turning harder. Yes, they could be swapped out for the Speedix wings, which mostly fixed that particular problem, but that was one more thing to keep track of, and even then, she preferred her Enchantix wings. She went through the drill.

"That's good!" Techna said. "I've got the readings!"

"Good!" Flora said, once again detransforming. "What does it say?"

"That's odd," Techna said, double-checking the readout on her screen. "You have slightly more energy available, but your spells are less potent. A lot less."

"That's not that surprising, actually," Flora said.

"Oh?" Techna asked. "Why not?"

"I've been using my Enchantix for a *long* time," Flora said. "I'm comfortable with it, I know how to use it, and I know all its little quirks. Believix just feels... weird. Clumsy even."

"Hmm," Techna hummed in thought. "That's interesting. I hadn't noticed it before, but now that you mention it, I feel the same way. Believix is powerful, but it's not what I'm used to."

"You probably didn't notice at first because you don't spend as much time as I do studying magic," Flora said.

"Probably," Techna said. "I wonder if the others feel the same?"

"I know Bloom does," Flora said. "I'm pretty sure Stella's of the same opinion."

"Musa probably just likes having new transformations because they're new," Techna said.

"Probably," Flora agreed. "I don't know about Aisha, but I think she'll have the same reaction as Musa."

"She also started looping more recently, so she hasn't had time to get used to Enchantix the way we have," Techna said.

"True," Flora said. "So, we've figured out what's going on. Do you want to test out the rest of my forms or should we just pack it in?"

"We should probably test out the others if only for the sake of being thorough," Techna said.

"Alright," Flora said. "Still, I refuse to make something as silly as Butterflyix my new go-to transformation."

"I think we can agree on that," Techna said, a grin pulling at the corner of her mouth.

Author's Notes:

13.1: Welcome to the new era of Winx loops!

13.2: Doesn't everyone have that one villain they love to root for, even though you know they're evil?

13.3: And Roxy makes her first appearance!

13.4: Welcome to our new running gag.

13.5: See 13.4.

13.6: See 13.5.

13.7: Because we needed more Warm And Fuzzy. Never say no to Warm And Fuzzy.

13.8: I did mention new running gag, right?

13.9: Loopers are scary. Anchors are *terrifying* .

13.10: Newer isn't always better.

Chapter 14

14.1

The fairy loopers stared in disbelief at the Alfea Back-to-School Dance. Yes, fairies as a group did have a certain predilection for shiny things, especially clothing, but this... This was insane!

"Is that... Faragonda wearing gold lame?" Bloom asked.

"Yggdrasil help me, I did *not* need to see that," Musa said, rubbing her eyes.

"Better than what I'm looking at," Stella said, gagging slightly. "Bell bottom pants. Who *wears* those?"

"Cordatorta, apparently," Techna said. "There do seem to be an unusual number of out-dated outfits at this dance."

"Disco," Bloom said. " *Why?* "

"Best guess?" Flora said. "Yggdrasil glitch."

"I hope so," Musa said. "I really hope so, because if this is a new variant..."

"Gaahh!" Stella said. "These outfits are so tasteless! Seriously you guys! DISCO IS DEAD!"

A sudden hush covered the hall. Even the music cut out for a moment.

Then the Winx found themselves fleeing as an angry mob attempted to catch the girl who had blasphemed against the great disco gods.

14.2

Hub loops with Techna were an experience, Flora thought. Maybe it was the fact that they typically lasted for decades, even as much as a century, maybe it was the fact that they didn't have access to any of their usual diversions, and maybe it was Techna just being Techna, but they were always interesting.

This loop was no exception.

"I'm home!" Flora called out, pushing open the door of the Miami apartment the two women were sharing.

"Welcome home," Techna said from the living room.

Flora placed her bag on the table by the door and kicked off her shoes before making her way further into the house. "How was your day?" Flora asked, moving into the kitchen to water the flowers she kept in a window box.

"Pretty well," Techna said. "I started a new project today."

"Oh?" Flora asked. "What are you making this time?"

"I'm still working on it at the moment, if you want to come in and see," Techna said.

"Sure," Flora said, making her way into the living room.

Techna sat in the middle of the floor, surrounded by what looked like electronic shrapnel.

"You know you're going to be the one cleaning that up, right?" Flora said.

"Don't I always?" Techna replied. "Anyways, look!" She held up something that looked like the offspring of a TV remote and a pair of headphones, with maybe a little cellphone somewhere in the ancestry.

"I give up," Flora said. "What am I looking at?"

"I'm trying to make a pair of wireless headphones that can connect to my computer," Techna said.

"Don't those already exist?" Flora asked.

"Yes, but not like what I'm trying to make," Techna said. "I'm trying to set it up so the connection goes two ways."

"You're trying to use your headphones to open your Email?" Flora asked.

"Not just open my email!" Techna said. "Once I get it working, I'll be able to do anything with my computer that I want without even going near it!"

Flora looked at the parts strewn across the floor. "Techna, I'm detecting a flaw in your plan."

"What flaw?" Techna said. "Once I get it working I'll be able to use my computer while making dinner! Or even while I'm working on one of my other projects!"

"Techna, you're missing something obvious," Flora said.

"What am I missing?"

"You can control your computer from anywhere in the house with those things," Flora said. "But how are you going to see the *screen?* "

Techna blinked. "Oh. I... completely forgot about that. That does limit things quite a bit, doesn't it?"

"Just a bit," Flora said, reaching over to ruffle Techna's hair.

"Well, that just means I need to attach a screen to the headphones!" Techna said.

"Honey," Flora said. "If you want to go that route, I can buy you a smartphone for your birthday, and you can use that, just like everyone else."

"But... but... but..."

"Not everything needs to be reinvented, sweetie," Flora said. "Now why don't you clean up in here and I'll go make dinner?"

"Alright," Techna relented.

Flora went back into the kitchen, shaking her head as she went to go make dinner. Hub loops with Techna were an experience, Flora thought. No matter what it was, the two of them always found a way to make it interesting.

Neither of them would have had it any other way.

14.3

"Techna," Flora said, glaring at her girlfriend.

"Flora," Techna said, trying not to laugh.

"What do you have to say for yourself?" Flora said.

"You look adorable like that?" Techna suggested.

"DON'T conduct any more experiments involving Roxy's magic on me without my consent!" Flora said, the two fur-covered, triangular ears atop her head twitching in annoyance.

"Alright," Techna said. "I'm sorry. It wasn't supposed to go off like it did, and I'm sorry you were caught in it."

"It's fine," Flora said, calming down. "It's just weird."

"You are pretty cute like that," Techna said, gently pulling the shorter girl into her lap.

"Maybe," Flora said. "That doesn't mean it doesn't feel-" She stiffened. "Doesn't feel... Techna, please..."

"Please what?" Techna asked as she gently scratched the back of Flora's new ears.

"Please..." Flora said. She shivered, then began to lean back into the scratching, a purr escaping from her chest.

"Please keep scratching?" Techna asked.

Flora simply purred some more.

"That is adorable," Bloom said. "I'm getting the camera."

Flora kept purring.

14.4

"I'm back," Musa called out as she entered the room she and Techna were sharing for the loop. Flora wasn't Awake this loop so the baseline room assignments had been left unaltered.

"Good," Techna said from her seat in front of her computer. "How'd it go?"

"Pretty well," Musa said. "I even had some fun in the process. What are you working on?"

"I'm trying to come up with a way to detect loopers," Techna said.

"Still trying to find our elusive stealth anchor I see," Musa said. "How's that working out for you?"

"It's not," Techna grumbled. "If only loopers had some sort of identifying feature, like a unique energy signature or something, then I might be able to make some progress, but so far, nothing. At least your job went well."

"Yep," Musa said. "The next three years should be incident-free."

"How'd you do it this time?" Techna asked.

"I used a potato," Musa said.

"A potato?" Techna said, raising an eyebrow. "You defeated the Trix, Darkar, and Valtor with a potato?"

"Yep," Musa said.

"...Okay, how?" Techna asked.

"In order? It was weird, it was complicated, and I stabbed him in the face with the potato," Musa said.

"You stabbed Valtor with a potato," Techna said.

"In the face," Musa confirmed.

"And it defeated him," Techna said.

"Uh huh," Musa said, starting to pick through her CD collection. "Potato to the face."

"Right," Techna said. "I'm going back to my impossible task. It's got to be easier than figuring out how what you did is even possible."

"Probably," Musa agreed.

14.5 (Masterweaver)

"You know," Blake mentioned offhandedly as he adjusted his power glove, "in all the loops I've been here, I've never actually..."

Vulkan gave him a look. "Never actually what?"

"...well, never actually met, uh, Slaanesh." The space marine held up his hand. "Not that I want to! It's just, well... I'm from a magical highschool, part of a club of teenage magical girls with very... exposed clothing, and shi's... you know, this goddess of perversion? I'd have assumed shi'd come up at some point, especially with..." He gestured at himself, vaguely.

"Ah, yes. That is interesting." Vulkan put down the gun twice his size he was working on. "Come to think of it... I don't know if anyone native to your loop has encountered hir. Which is quite odd, all things considered. I wonder why...?"

"...and here, you see, you used it's with an apostrophe, when it should be its without. And actually, this paragraph here is kind of weirdly structured on the whole."

"Oh, yes, I do see. I'll have to rewrite that, thanks.

"No prob, Fand. No prob."

Blake shrugged. "Let's not poke the sleeping demon god."

14.6 (Awesomedude17)

Rick, being the local anchor, knew that eventually, something different from 'Baseline' would have to happen.

So he was not surprised when his granddaughter was replaced by another looper.

So he decided to test her the only way he knew how.

Oh, how Bloom hated the fact that her grandfather this loop was a psychotic drunk.

"Rick, little help here!" Bloom yelled as some intergalactic police tried to arrest them.

"Relax, Bloom! I *uuuurp* got a plan." Rick pressed a button on his ship, and blue fire began bathing the battlefield, burning the aliens attacking them. Bloom, being a fire user herself, was unaffected.

And Rick wiped off some excess soot from his lab coat.

"How'd you do that?"

"Sc-Science Bloom. It's science. My coat's fire-proof and it's sum-HOLY SHIT!"

"What is it?"

"Your name's Bloom, and my-my real granddaughter's name is Summer. What a huge coincidence!"

"..." Bloom sighed and grabbed Rick by his arm.

"Rick, how about you drop me off at home, and go out drinking."

Rick deadpanned and groaned.

"Ugh, fine. Everyone's a critic."

14.7 (lord Martiya)

"Fool, we're immune to fairy magic." Ogron declared.

Then the stream of white-hot flame hit them.

"I AM A MAN!" Valtor shouted to the now vaporized Earthling warlocks.

"Then die like a man!"

Anagan, who had dodged Valtor's attack thanks to his speed, jumped the Dragonfire warlock and punched him, sending him down with surprising ease. After a moment of surprise, he grabbed his stunned enemy and looked at him in the eyes.

"I can't believe it!" he shouted in Valtor's face. "The great Valtor, powered by the Dragon's Flame itself, possessing a raw power that matches the Three Ancestral Witches and Darkar combined, and he sucks at meelee!"

"I just don't like such barbaric things." Valtor calmly replied.

Anagan smiled, and punched him. And broke his hand on the face of Valtor's demonic form.

"Of course I'm not stupid enough to be COMPLETELY unprepared to you barbarians..."

Thankfully for Anagan, Valtor preferred quick deaths, considering prolonged ones both barbaric and stupid.

"Aisha, that was mean." Flora reprimanded her friend for arranging the fight.

"So what?" Aisha replied.

14.8 (Evilhumour)

"Hide me hide me *hideme!* " a familiar voice called out, running past Flora and Techna, diving into their closet and slamming the door shut behind her.

Sharing a look with her girlfriend, Flora walked close to the closet and knocked on it softly. "Fand? Is everything okay?"

"...yes?" A soft reply did not convince either fairy and the Admin-in-hiding knew that. "Okay, I *may* have had too much to drink last night and I *might* have shipped drunk some people that I shouldn't have."

Flora winced, knowing that she was going to regret this. "Who did you ship?"

"Zeus and Odin," Fand answered. "Odin is pissed that I did this sort of thing and Zeus is mad that I made him on the bottom." There was a pause before Fand spoke again. "So does this mean I get to hide here?"

With a weak nod of her head, Flora allowed the Admin to stay in her closet.

14.8 cont. (Vinylshadow)

Zeus and Odin stepped into the room moments later.

Looking around, they exchanged a look and then took seats.

Flora and Techna stood awkwardly by the walls and fidgeted.

"So, how long do you think it'll take for Fand to...hm...come out of the closet, as it were?" Zeus asked, checking his watch. Odin snorted.

14.9

Flora sat at the Fruity Music Bar, sipping at her drink. Her ID said she was twenty three, her physical body said she was sixteen, her memories said she was several million years old, and right now she felt every one of those years twice.

It was the second in a back-to-back pair of solo loops for the fairy, something she never liked. Being isolated from her friends like that hurt. Last loop, she'd tried something different to get away from the cardboard cutouts that looked like her friends. Something she'd somehow never done before.

Flora had gone home.

She'd demonstrated her knowledge and power, graduated from Alphea in record time, and then returned to her home on Linphea with her family. She'd reconnected with her parents as best she could, and with her little sister Miele, but there was always something nagging at her that made her feel like something was wrong with the situation. Yes, she'd missed her friends, but there was more to it than that. It wasn't until the loop ended that she'd been able to put her finger on what it was.

Miele was mercifully the same, though she was back to her younger self. She wasn't a looper, of course she had no memories of the events of the previous loop. It was her parents that had been the true punch to the gut.

They were completely different people. Their names, their personalities, even their appearances had changed. Dramatically. Casting her mind back through the eons of memories she had accumulated, Flora was struck by the realization that this was far from the first time this had happened. Judging by her memories, her parents were one of the least stable aspects of the loop. They were never the same from loop to loop. Home could never truly be home if the people in it kept changing. The knowledge had struck Flora with the weight of a mountain of bricks.

Hence why Flora was sitting alone at the Music Bar.

"You gonna sit there all day?" a voice asked.

Flora looked up. Unless she was mistaken, that was Roxy at thirteen. "I might," Flora said, forcing a weak smile.

"Why?" Roxy asked. "Don't you have better things to do?"

"Maybe," Flora said, turning back to her drink. "But I have time. I have too much time."

"Then shouldn't you find something to do?" Roxy asked.

"If only it were that easy," Flora said. "I've done so many things that I'm starting to run out."

"Then do something you haven't done in a while!" Roxy said with a smile.

"Maybe I will," Flora said. "Thanks."

"No problem!" Roxy said, running off.

"I'm sorry if my daughter was bothering you," Klaus said.

"Not at all," Flora said. She glanced down at her now mostly empty glass. "Could I get another drink?"

"Another Strawberry Lemon?" he asked.

"Yes please," Flora said. "How many of these things do you sell anyways?"

"More than you'd expect," Klaus said. "Though most of those are people being curious."

"Makes sense," Flora said.

"So is there a reason you've been moping around my bar all day?" Klaus asked. "Not that I'm complaining about the business, especially this time of year, but shouldn't you be in school or something?"

"I'm older than I look," Flora said. "I graduated quite a while back."

"I doubt you're that old," Klaus said.

Flora suppressed a laugh.

"Anyways, what's on your mind?" he asked.

"It's... I recently went home for the first time in a long time," Flora said. "And it didn't feel like home."

"Ah," Klaus said. "That'll happen."

"Really?" Flora asked, raising an eyebrow.

"It happens to everyone eventually," Klaus said. "You leave home to grow up, and when you come back, you're too big for your old nest."

"I'm not a bird," Flora said, amused.

"Doesn't matter," Klaus said. "You left home, learned to live on your own, and then you went back and couldn't go back to being part of your old world. Happens to everyone eventually."

"I don't think my specific situation happens to everyone," Flora said bitterly.

"Maybe not," Klaus said. "Doesn't mean yours is all that special."

"Maybe, maybe not," Flora said. "I just don't know what to do next."

"Didn't my daughter just tell you?" Klaus said. "Find something to do. Something new, something old, doesn't matter. Find something to do, find your place in the world."

Flora looked down at the bar and idly traced a pattern in the wood. Her lips quirked upwards as she watched the wood grain subtly shift to follow her finger tip. "I suppose that's all I can do, isn't it?" Flora asked.

"That's all anyone can do," Klaus said. "Hey, if you need a job, I'm looking to hire."

"Thanks," Flora said. "But I think I can find my own way." She got to her feet and paid for her drinks. "I should get going. I'll see you around."

"See you around," Klaus said. "Stay out of trouble."

"I can try," Flora said. "I can certainly try."

14.10 (Evilhumour)

"Flora?"

"Yes Techna?"

"Why are we dealing with one of those bad forced couple loops?" Techna looked at an unAwake Bloom and Blake sharing a sunday together.

"I'm willingly to bet either our Admin got drunk *or* it is one of those odd loops," Flora watched Icy proclaim her love for the Guardian Fairy of Domino. "Okay, I am fairly certain it is Fand's doing."

" *Why* do they always think it is *my* fault for an odd romance loop?!" Fand whined, faceplanting.

"Do you *really* want me to answer that one?" Bast asked, leafing through the questionable material with her and that beast Fenrir.

Fand simply groaned louder.

14.11 (lord Martiya)

It was another Loop where the Trix had mob connections. And that misadventure with the time machine. Only, this time it had gone weird, and there had been some unintended consequences.

"Darko! Stop attacking my lovers, or I swear on the Ancestors you'll pay!" Icy bellowed, shielding the unAwake Bloom and Blake from her childhood friend and his soldiers, while her sister was making out with her lover completely oblivious to the fight.

"How did it even happen?!" Flora wondered out loud as she looked from afar.

"Well, when my sisters returned from the past chased by the tyrannosaurus rex Bloom and Blake helped me comforting my sisters, and somehow it turned to love between Icy and the redheads, while Darko was the closest thing to a boyfriend Icy ever had." Darcy explained.

"Actually, I was talking about Stormy and Knut."

"I don't know, and for once I'm happy being ignorant."

14.12

"Hey Dweeb," Ben Tennyson said. "Ready for the trip?"

"Yes," Gwen said. "Me and my sister."

"Sister?" Ben asked.

"Yep," Gwen said. "And before you ask, she's Awake."

"Where's she from?" Ben asked.

"Solaria," a blonde girl said, stepping out of the house with luggage in tow. "I'm Princess Stella of Solaria."

"No, I meant what loop," Ben said.

"Winx," Stella said. "I'm a fairy."

"That loop anchored by the plant girl?" Ben asked.

"Yes," Stella said.

"Cool!" Ben said. "Hold still for a sec, would ya?"

"What? Why?" Stella demanded as Ben pulled out a white watch and held it up to her.

"Alien DNA detected," the watch announced. "Scanning." A green light came from the device and swept over the girl. "New species found. Classification: Unknown."

"Please tell me it's supposed to do that," Stella said.

"It's supposed to do that," Gwen said reassuringly.

"Cool, new alien!" Ben said, fiddling with the watch. "Wonder what it does?"

"I am a fairy, not an alien!" Stella said.

"Are you from Earth?" Ben asked.

"Well, no," Stella said.

"Then you're an alien," Ben said. "Simple as that. Now, who's ready for the best road trip in the history of Yggdrasil?"

"Give it up Ghostfreak," Ben said. "This never ends well for you."

"Not this time!" the phantom hissed. "This time, you will be MINE!"

"You asked for it," Ben said, dialing in an alien. "Flutterstar!" When the transformation faded... Ben wasn't really all that different, actually. The big change was that his hair was now blonde. Well, that and the wings coming out of his back. He held up his hand and pointed it at the ghost. "Solar Ray!"

The magic light hit the alien, burning with the fury of the sun itself. In seconds the creature was nothing but ash on the wind.

"Well, that was fun," Ben said, powering down.

"Well, the loop's getting close to ending," Ben said. "What do you think of it?"

"I think your loop is disgusting," Stella said, wringing slime out of her hair. "Everything is ugly, slimy, or both."

"I know, right?" Ben said. "Isn't it fun?"

Stella did not dignify that with a response.

"Ah, I'm just joking," Ben said. "Hey, I got you a present!"

"If this is another prank..." Stella trailed off warningly.

"Nope!" Ben said cheerfully. "Here, catch!" He pulled something out of his pocket and tossed it to Stella who caught it reflexively.

"Really?" she held up an Omnitrix. "I just finished complaining about ugly slimy things! Why do you think I would want to turn into ugly slimy things?"

"Because it's fun," Ben said. "Hey, don't worry too much, I only loaded it with baseline aliens, and you'll only have access to ten of them until the Omnitrix decides it likes you enough. Gotta follow that tradition!"

"Funny," Stella said. "I'm almost afraid to ask, but which ten aliens?"

"I figured I'd give you the classics, mostly," Ben said. "Let's see, you've got XLR8,"

"Acceptable, I suppose," Stella said.

"Four Arms,"

"Hmph."

"Diamondhead,"

"Okay, I kind of like that one."

"Wildmutt,"

"Ewww."

"Grey Matter,"

"Ugly."

"Ripjaws,"

"Really ugly."

"Upgrade,"

"That's more Techna's thing."

"Heatblast,"

"I suppose."

"Big Chill, because having Ghostfreak around is a pain."

Stella shivered in distaste.

"Aaaand what was that last one?" Ben said. "I forget. Why don't you check?"

Stella glared at him, then stared at the watch she was now holding. "Fine." She started fiddling with it the same way she'd seen him do dozens of times. All the aliens he mentioned were there in silhouette, and there was one more... "Benjamin Kirby Tennyson!" Stella roared. "You monster! You gave me Stinkfly!"

14.13 (Awesomedude17)

"Alright Flora, what do you have in mind now?" Techna asked.

"Well, a while ago, Stella was in another branch called the Mario Universe, and she brought back some gifts." Flora reached into her pocket and took out a bell with beady eyes on it. "Like this."

"What is it?" Techna tilted her head.

"Watch." Flora replied with a hint of seduction. She put the bell to her neck, and with a puff of smoke, reappeared in a full body cat suit.

"Uh, Flora?"

"What is it Techna? Is it weird? Puuuuuurrrr..." Flora mewed, flicking her tail into Techna's face.

"Well no... it's... Oh dear..." Techna fanned herself.

"Hehe... come here..."

"Uh... Ah screw it... come here kitty."

Flora meowed as she jumped onto Techna.

"Hey girls... have you seen..." Bloom said as she entered the room, seeing Flora in a cat suit, on top of Techna... and promptly decided to leave the room wordlessly.

The two lovers promptly broke into laughter.

"The look on her face... now, where were we?" Flora asked.

"Why don't you figure it out?"

"Ooo, hehe."

Author's Notes:

14.1: The worst part? That's not a glitch...

14.2: Apparently learning to emote has degraded Techna's common sense. Well, at least it's amusing.

14.3: I blame Flora for wearing too many outfits with cat ears. It was only a matter of time until she had actual cat ears.

14.4: Potato stabbings!

14.5: Is this a bad time to bring up the tentacle monsters that guard the Golden Kingdom?

14.6: ...I got nothing. Drunk scientist who isn't Tony Stark. Apparently that is a thing.

14.7: I'm not entirely sure what's going on here, but I'm pretty sure it's violent.

14.8: ...Fand. Why. Why must you do this? What is it that compels you to do these things?

14.9: Even Flora has her moments of weakness. Looping is not for the faint of heart.

14.10: I could make a joke about this, but it would be too easy. Waaay too easy.

14.11: I also like being ignorant on that topic.

14.12: Seems legit. After all, Charm-IX, Enchant-IX, Believ-IX, Omnitr-IX. See? It fits the pattern!

14.13: Wow. Mario and Winx, both things marketed to children, somehow combine into that. Yep. I'm out. See you all later.

Chapter 15

15.1

"Hi! Will you play with me?" a familiar boy asked.

" *I will break you* ," Flora snarled, her vampiric side taking full control as she launched herself at Yggdrasil's most moronic denizen.

"Was that really necessary?" Musa asked, staring in horrified awe at the bloody mess before her. "I know he's an MLE, but even Billy doesn't deserve to die like *that* ."

"You weren't Awake for the last time he was here," Flora said darkly. "Never again. *Never* again."

15.2

"Well, it's just us for another loop," Flora said, looking out on the usual first year dance from her chair.

"That happens quite a bit, doesn't it?" Techna asked from her spot beside Flora.

"A bit," Flora said. "I don't know if it's because you were the first to Awaken after me or if there's another reason, but you're Awake more often than any of the others."

"I am?" Techna asked.

"You are," Flora said with a smile and a quick squeeze of her girlfriend's hand. "I have charts if you'd like to see them."

"Maybe I will," Techna said with a grin. "If you actually made charts..."

"It's your fault you know," Flora said. "I never made charts like this before we started dating."

"I think we've both rubbed off on each other," Techna said. "Hey, do you mind if I get a drink? It's kind of hot in here."

Flora looked over at the crowd by the punch bowl. "Good luck," she said with a smile.

"I'll be back soon," Techna said. "I hope." She started walking.

"H-hey, uh, Flora?" a voice asked.

Flora turned to find the source of the voice. "Timmy?" she said. "What is it?"

"I, uh, I wanted to ask you a question," he said nervously.

"I'm sorry, but I already have a date for tonight," Flora said gently.

"No, that's- that's not what I wanted to ask," he said.

"Then what is it?" Flora asked.

"Well, uh, you, you mentioned something about a... loop?" Timmy said.

"I did," Flora said. "What about it?"

"Well, I was wondering..." Timmy said, visibly gathering his courage before blurting out his question in a rush. "I was wondering if it had anything to do with the way time keeps resetting itself."

Flora blinked in surprise. "You're looping," she said. "How long have you been looping for?"

"Uh, a while?" Timmy said. "You... know about this?"

"I know quite a lot about this," Flora said. "Timmy, how long have you been looping for?"

"Uh, this is time loop iteration... fifty seven," Timmy said.

"Fifty seven," Flora said. "Why didn't you mention this to someone before now?"

"I didn't want to mess up the timeline," Timmy said, nervous. "And who would I have told anyways?"

Flora opened her mouth to speak, then closed it. "I suppose that's a good point," she said.

"Hey Flora, I'm back," Techna said. "I got you a drink too." She sat down and put the drinks on the windowsill behind them. "Hi Timmy. What are you doing here?"

"Techna, Timmy's looping," Flora said.

"Oh," Techna said, surprised. Then realization hit her and the blood drained from her face. "Oh. How long?" she asked weakly.

"Uh," Timmy said, looking away and turning red.

"Long enough, I'd say," Flora said with a sigh. "Oh dear. I suppose this could have gone better. Let's find somewhere a bit quieter before we take this any further."

"So that's the basics of what's going on," Flora said. "Now that you're active, you'll Awaken for various loops, and you'll eventually get fused loops in other universes. At some point you'll have to come over and visit so we can teach you how to make a Pocket and use the Ping, but that can wait for later."

"Uh, thanks," Timmy said. He was still carefully not looking at Techna, who was equally carefully not looking at him. "I'll try to find

some time for that..."

Flora looked between the two, then nodded to herself. "I'm going to leave the two of you alone now," Flora said. "You obviously need to talk this out." She got up and departed before either of the technologically inclined loopers could protest. The door closed behind her, leaving the two alone.

"So, ah," Techna said.

"Uh, yeah," Timmy said.

"Timmy, I-" Techna said, then looked away. "I'm sorry."

"It wasn't you," Timmy said. "That girl was just... baseline you."

"But it was me," Techna said. "That was me for a long time. It... I didn't start dating Flora immediately. Well, sort of... it's... it's complicated, and I'm sorry."

Timmy looked away as well. "I guess... I guess that's it then."

"Timmy, I..." Techna said. "I liked you. I liked dating you. But dating the same person over and over again, and watching them never remember any of it... That hurt. That hurt so much."

"I... I see," Timmy said.

"And now..." Techna said. "I still like you Timmy, it's not that, but Flora and I... we've been together for so long... I... I love her. I'm sorry."

"I understand," Timmy said. "You've been together for a long, long time, haven't you?"

"Yes," Techna said. "I think we hit our three million year anniversary a few hundred loops back."

"You've been together all that time?" he asked.

"Mostly," Techna said. "We've had a few fights, but... I love her too much to ever leave her."

"I understand," Timmy said sadly. "I... I'm sorry for what happened with your unAwake self."

"Don't be," Techna said. "Baseline me is supposed to fall for you. If you make her happy, that's good."

"You... you're not her, are you?" Timmy asked.

"No," Techna said. "Not any more. So... friends?"

"...yeah. Friends," Timmy said with a confused smile.

"How did it go?" Flora asked as her girlfriend walked out of the room.

Techna didn't say anything as she threw her arms around the other girl and buried her face in Flora's shoulder.

"Easy there sweetie," Flora said, putting her own arms around Techna and gently stroking her back. "It'll be alright."

"I know," Techna said, shivering slightly. "It went better than it could have."

"Are you alright?" Flora asked.

"I'll be fine," Techna said. "That... that was the hardest thing I've ever done."

"I know," Flora said. "But you did it."

"I did," Techna said, shivering again. "Flora... I really don't feel like dancing right now."

"That's alright," Flora said. "Let's go back to the room. I'll make you something to eat."

"Thank you Flora," Techna said. "I'm sorry about this."

"It's fine," Flora said, slowly moving towards the exit. "You've had a tough night. It'll be better in the morning."

"I know," Techna said. "Flora..."

"Yes, Techna?" Flora asked.

"Flora..." Techna said, her voice choking up. "I... I love you." They'd both said it before, but those three words had never meant more to either of them.

"I love you too," Flora said. "Now let's get you to bed. Things will be better in the morning."

15.3

"So we're supposed to drive tanks and blow each other up," Techna summed up.

"Yes," Miho said.

"And this is considered feminine."

"Yes."

"Are there limits to what you can use?" Techna asked.

"Yes," Miho said. "They vary by loop, but you can find them in the rulebook. Why?"

"I like to tinker," Techna said with a grin.

"I imagine they will change the rules to forbid this in the future," Miho said.

"Probably," Techna said. "Now hold us steady, I need to finish them off."

The main turret of the tank they shared fired, a magnetically accelerated forty kilogram steel-jacketed slug tearing across the landscape at twelve hundred meters per second, taking out the final enemy tank.

"And that's game," Techna said.

"Yes," Miho said. "Tea?"

15.4

"How was your last loop?" Musa asked.

"Interesting," Techna said.

"At first we thought it was a Hub loop," Flora said. "Then we found ourselves in the wrong place at the wrong time."

"And then in the wrong time," Techna added.

"You've lost me," Musa said.

"We were on a road trip and we found ourselves in this little West Virginia town called Grantville," Techna said.

"I think there was a wedding going on at the time," Flora said.

"Yeah, Mike's sister's, remember?" Techna said. "Anyways, we were stopping for gas when a... thing happened."

"The locals called it the Ring of Fire," Flora said. "The entire town was grabbed and yanked backwards in time."

"And shifted oddly in space," Techna commented. "The entire town was rotated a bit and then dropped in Germany in the year 1631."

"Refresh my Hub history memory," Musa said. "What was happening in Germany in 1631?"

"The Thirty Years War," Flora said sadly. "Very violent. Very bloody."

"What happened then?" Musa asked.

"Well, the time travel unlocked our powers," Techna said. "Which was both good and bad."

"Why was it bad?" Musa asked.

"Well, it didn't exactly make it easier to convince the locals that the American people weren't evil sorcerers who needed to be burned at the stake," Techna said.

"Well at least it didn't make our chances with the Inquisition any worse," Flora said. "The various churches hated us."

"Yeah, but they couldn't do anything about it," Techna said. "I heard that one group ultimately decided that we were angels sent to herald a new age of peace and enlightenment."

"I didn't hear about that one," Flora said.

"Oh yes," Techna said. "You were the Angel of Mercy and I was the Angel of Knowledge. It was kind of funny. Anyways, we went and put a stop to the war and probably pushed civilization forwards some three or four hundred years."

"Sounds like fun," Musa said.

"Mostly," Flora said. "Though it took some work to make it fun."

"That's every loop," Musa said.

"Not all of them," Techna said. "I didn't have to do a thing to Tron to make it fun!"

15.5 (lord Martiya)

A Baseline Loop, and they were to the fight for the Lilo. And Mitzi was once again cheering for the Trix, even if they had taken her sister hostage. And Bloom had enough.

"Mitzi, she's your sister they have in hostage!"

"SISTER?!" the Trix shouted.

At that they gently put Macy down and teleported away with Mitzi. Who would turn out a few days later with her hair and skin having lost all colour, and completely terrified even of her own shadow. Literally.

"Nice to know the Trix still have standards." Flora mused.

"Nice to know how to end the Lilo mission quickly." Bloom replied.

15.6

Flora really didn't like this loop. The fact that this wasn't her first time visiting it did not make it better.

"Welcome to my island, and you're all here for one reason," the old man said, as usual.

The fact that Flora had never actually died in this particular loop also did not make it better. For all that her powers made her more than capable of surviving here, it was far from enjoyable.

"The Mortal Kombat tournament," Shao Khan pronounced with finality.

And there went her last chance of it being a less violent variant, like the time it had been the Marital Kombat tournament. That was a weird loop. And now for the announcement.

"The first match," Shao Khan said. "Will be between Flora Victoria." He pointed at her.

Flora nodded, resisting the urge to roll her eyes in disgust. There were ways out of this, but being in the first round made things much more difficult. The obvious next question was who her opponent would be.

"And Dio Brando," Shao Khan said.

Flora spun to stare at the man Shao Khan pointed at, a gasp escaping from her lips.

It was the man who had beaten her, broken her, and left her for dead. The man who had come within inches of destroying her universe, and her along with it. The man from her nightmares.

Dio looked at her and bared his teeth in a predatory grin.

Flora would have to fight him. And she would be doing it alone.

The fight happened on the beach at dawn. The waves gently washed against the shore as a light breeze rustled the leaves on the palm trees. Birdsong drifted across the island, disturbing the silence. There were worse places to die, Flora thought. Much worse.

"You will pay for what you did to me," Dio said, standing at the other end of the strand of beach.

She might lose. But she wouldn't go down without a fight. "Maybe," Flora said. "But I'll never regret preventing you from Ascending."

"You didn't prevent me from doing ANYTHING!" Dio said. "You are weak. I'm going to enjoy killing you."

"Kill me if you want," Flora said. "You won't have long to gloat." Raiden wasn't Awake, as best as she could tell. When she died, the

loop would crash. It was possible she'd land in a punishment loop for it, but if it denied Dio a chance at victory, then that was a price she was willing to accept.

"Begin!" Shao Khan said.

Dio rushed at Flora, even as she shifted into her vampire form. She brushed his fist aside and slammed her elbow into his chest. Bone crumbled as she turned his rib cage into a mess of bone fragments and gore. Dio flew backwards from the point of impact to land on his back in the sand. Before Flora could even react, his body healed and he was back on his feet.

Flora sighed. This was going to be a long fight.

The combatants launched themselves at each other for another round.

The sun was setting as the two fighters staggered back to their feet. The beach was now a ruin, littered with rubble and wreckage.

"You're... persistent," Dio spat at her.

"And you're annoying," Flora said, her voice rough with pain. Her power was fading and Dio was only winded. If she kept fighting like this, Dio would win. Maybe not just yet, but by the time night had fallen she would be dead. For all that she was willing to die to stop Dio, that didn't mean she liked the prospect.

"You're going to lose," Dio said, pulling himself up and starting towards her. "Just like the last time we fought."

"Last time..." Flora said. She pulled herself upright again. "Last time I remember you were the one who lost."

"You got lucky last time," Dio said. "This time, there's no dragon to help you!"

"Maybe not," Flora said. "But I've fought gods before, and you're not one of them." There was one last thing she could try. One final gambit. She shifted back into her human form. "Enchantix!" Her familiar wings sprouted from her back as the transformation swept over her. Suddenly she felt rejuvenated and restored. She reached out with her magic and the world around her responded. Power flowed into her, and she couldn't help but note just how *right* it felt to be using her old powers like this.

"You couldn't beat me as a vampire!" Dio said. "How do you plan to defeat me as a fairy?"

"Like this," Flora said, her voice resonating oddly. Her body began to glow with power as she raised her hands.

Dio took an unconscious step back. This was too much like what the red-haired one had done to him.

"Oh no," Flora said. "You're not going anywhere." Vines burst up out of the ground to tangle around Dio, holding him in place as she slowly walked towards him. He struggled, but the vines held him easily.

"You're not the only one with plant powers!" Dio said. Familiar magic coalesced around him and pushed at the power binding him in place.

"You won't beat me," Flora said, her voice still echoing with power. "Not this time. Not with your powers and certainly not with mine. You lose this time. You lose every time. You will never achieve your goal."

"How?" Dio demanded. "I beat you! How are you this strong?"

"You beat me when I was using borrowed powers," Flora said. "Powers from other loops. Powers not my own. Not this time. This is *MY* power. Mine, and no one else's. This time, you face the strongest fairy in the multiverse."

"You lie!" Dio said. "You will never defeat me!"

"Silence," Flora said. "I have something to say to you. As of this moment, my loop is off limits to you. If I ever find you in my home again, this is what awaits you. So if you loop into my world, you had better run. Run, hide, and pray that I don't find you."

"Finish him!" Shao Khan said.

"Your reign of terror ends here, Dio Brando," Flora said, raising her hands. The vines ensnaring Dio rose into the air, taking the MLE with them. "I'm done having nightmares about you. Now? Now it's your turn. Sweet dreams." More vines rose from the earth, forming a ball around him. Flora slowly closed her hands and the vines tightened. She clenched her fist. There was a crunching sound from the ball of vines.

"It's over," Flora said, releasing her hold on the magic. The vines slithered back into the ground, leaving nothing of the MLE behind save a fine powder.

"The victory goes to Flora Victoria!" Shao Khan announced.

Flora stared at him for a moment, before speaking. "Where's the nearest bed?" she asked, then collapsed to the ground, fast asleep.

No nightmares haunted her tonight.

15.7

"I should kill you," Flora said, staring at the white fox-cat-bunny thing sitting on the floor in front of her.

"You should," Kyubey said. "I am widely considered a danger to the integrity of a loop."

Flora raised her hand, magic glowing as she prepared to cast a spell. "I should kill you," she repeated.

"You already stated this," Kyubey said.

"I know I did," Flora said. Her hand continued to glow, but she didn't cast.

"Then why did you say it again?" Kyubey asked.

"...because I'm trying to convince myself," Flora said, letting her hand drop. "I can't do it."

"Why not?" Kyubey inquired.

"Because you're not Billy, or Dio," Flora sighed. "You've never done anything to me, unless I count you hiding from me."

"I destroyed my own universe," Kyubey said.

"Yes," Flora said. "But you've already examined my loop. You know there's nothing here that you can use."

"True," Kyubey said. "The Magical Girl system does not function particularly well when in the presence of pre-existing magic, and the local powers are too volatile to control."

"You're not going to make any trouble," Flora said. "You pose no threat to my home, or even my friends."

"I do not," Kyubey acknowledged.

"...I won't kill you," Flora said. "I've had enough of death lately."

"Perhaps you need therapy," Kyubey suggested. "I believe the Ponies are quite skilled at it."

Flora blinked. "I'm being told to seek therapy. By a thing that does not understand emotions."

"It is an unusual circumstance," Kyubey said.

Flora shook her head. "Alright. I'm not going to kill you, but I'm also not letting you run around unsupervised. You're going to stay where I can keep tabs on you, and you will behave yourself, understood?"

"Understood," Kyubey said. "It is unusual for another looper to decide against killing me with neither reason nor outside influence."

"I'm tired," Flora said. "Blame it on one too many MLEs in a row."

"Interesting," Kyubey said.

"I'm going to get you a basket or something to sleep in," Flora said. "If you need anything else, let me know."

Kyubey watched the girl as she left the room. A looper who would not kill him. This required study.

"I need a vacation loop," Flora said as she lay down on her bed. After all the MLEs and other stressful events she'd experienced lately, even a baseline run felt like hard, difficult work. Maybe she really did need therapy. A trip to Equestria might be just the thing she needed.

There was a soft sound as the white bunny-cat sharing her room jumped up onto her bed from the floor. "Flora," he said.

"What do you want?" Flora asked.

"I have questions for you," Kyubey said.

"I probably have answers," Flora said. "What are the questions?"

"Your treatment of your enemies is inconsistent," the Incubator said.

"What do you mean?" Flora asked.

"You allow some enemies to go free, while you permanently eliminate others," Kyubey said. "Why?"

"It depends on which case you're asking about," Flora said. "The reasons are different in each case."

"Then I will be more specific," Kyubey said. "You sealed Darkar away in another dimension."

"He's too dangerous to allow him to run free," Flora said. "And he's unfortunately made of the dark reflection of all that's good. There's nothing else I can do."

"I see," Kyubey said. "You allowed Bloom to completely destroy Valtor."

"That's her decision," Flora said. "He was born from the Dragon Fire. Bloom is the one who should make the final decision on his fate."

"Has she ever spared him?" Kyubey asked.

"Sometimes," Flora said. "But in the end, it's her choice."

"I see," Kyubey said. "You sealed the Wizards of the Black Circle in ice."

"We did," Flora said.

"Why?" Kyubey asked.

"That one's a bit more complicated," Flora said. "The Wizards... They made it personal for all of us. They were the first enemy to kill one of us. They lied to us, tricked us, and betrayed us. They were offered a second chance, and they threw it away."

"So you attempted to spare them?"

"Yes."

"I see," Kyubey said. "What about the enemies you did not destroy?"

"Which one?" Flora asked, allowing her head to roll back with exhaustion. "I've fought a lot of people."

"Diaspro," Kyubey said. "She lied to you. She tricked you. She betrayed you. Why did you not deal with her in a more permanent fashion?"

"...Because I believe she can be better," Flora said. "I know she's unpleasant, and I don't really have any proof, but I don't think she's a bad person. She's as much a victim as anyone else. Her only fault is the way she responded. Also, she's more Bloom's enemy than mine."

"I see," Kyubey said. "Chimera and Countess Cassandra?"

"They never did anything to me personally," Flora said. "They were Stella's enemies."

"Do you believe they can be better?" Kyubey asked.

Flora looked up at the Incubator in surprise. "...Yes. Yes, I do. I don't know why, but I do."

"I see," Kyubey said. "The Trix? They have inflicted more suffering upon you and your friends than any other foe."

"I know," Flora said. "I know. They've done horrible things."

"Then why not eliminate them?" Kyubey asked.

"Because I know they can be better," Flora said.

"I see," Kyubey said.

"Is there a reason you're asking me this?" Flora asked.

"I am attempting to establish a pattern," Kyubey said. "I have one more question for you."

"Alright, but then I'm going to sleep," Flora said.

"Why did you not kill me?" Kyubey asked.

Flora was silent for a while as she considered the question. "...because maybe I think that you can be better too," she said.

"...I see," Kyubey said.

"Maybe you do," Flora said. "Good night."

"Good night, Flora," Kyubey said, jumping down from her bed and heading towards his basket in the corner. She had given him much to consider.

15.8

Techna was not enjoying this loop. Both she and Flora were awake, this should be a happy loop. But it wasn't. Techna had never seen Flora like this before. She'd seen the Anchor both happy and sad, angry and calm, solemn and mischievous, but not like this. Never like this. Flora looked almost broken, as if she was only holding on out of habit and not out of any real drive to keep moving. It turned what should have been a pleasant loop into a miserable one.

"Flora?" Techna asked, pushing open the door to their room.

"Hey," Flora said despondently from her bed.

"Are you alright?" Techna asked, sitting down on the bed next to her.

"Fine," Flora said.

"You don't look fine," Techna said. "Please, tell me what's wrong."

Flora looked away from her girlfriend. "Techna... do you ever feel like you're losing yourself? Or maybe you've already lost it and never noticed?"

"What do you mean?" Techna asked.

"Recently... the last few loops... I've been doing... things. Things I never would have done if it weren't for the loops," Flora said. "Things I didn't like."

"Flora..." Techna said, putting her hand on the other girl's shoulder.

"Techna," Flora said. "The loops... Am I still the same person?"

"No," Techna said without hesitation. "You're not the same person. And that's a good thing."

"Is it really?" Flora asked. "The old me never would have killed someone the way I have. The old me was a better person." Flora sobbed.

"She was more innocent," Techna corrected gently. "Not better. Flora, no matter what happened, you're still a good person. If you weren't you wouldn't be so worried about it right now."

"You got that out of a book," Flora accused.

"So what if I did?" Techna said. "That doesn't mean it's not true." She lay down and wrapped the smaller fairy up in her arms. "Flora. I love you. You were there for me for many of the hardest moments of my life. Now I want to be there for you. Please, let me help you."

"I don't know if I can be helped," Flora said with a weak sob.

"Then let's find out," Techna said. "It'll be an experiment we can do together."

"I don't understand most of your experiments," Flora said.

"You don't have to," Techna said. "Just let me try."

"Alright," Flora said. "We'll do this your way."

"Thank you, Flora," Techna said. "We'll find you again. I promise."

Author's notes:

15.1: Flora may have some left over trauma related to Billy...

15.2: Awkward...

15.3: Techna Und Panzer!

15.4: 1632, Winx edition!

15.5: Huh. I guess the Trix really don't like abusive siblings.

15.6: This rematch was a long time coming.

15.7: Flora, you need help. And Kyubey does not count.

15.8: Ouch.

Christmas Special

Flora's Christmas

(Awesomedude17, Detective Ethan Redfield, Firehawk242, Solaris Requiem, Purrs, Kingofsouls, MegaGeoAce)

Techna looked over the hotel in front of her and steeled her resolve.

Mobius Inn, a hotel owned by a dinosaur, run by dinosaurs and one of those Fazbear animatronics, and visited often by loopers when no one was interested in drinking but wanted to hang out.

Looking over the list of people she knew that Flora befriended, she deduced that almost every single one was in the plaza. Putting away the checklist, she walked in and was met with a greeting.

"Welcome to Mobius Inn, are you here to stay for the night?" Littlefoot asked, obviously rehearsed, but still full of energy, nonetheless.

"No, I'm just here to look for a few people."

"Alright, Techna, good luck."

"You too." Techna wasted no time looking for the first person on her list.

"I think youz been breathing Mako fumes too much dere, Shepard."

"I think it's obvious that the squigs you've been eating have gone bad."

"No zoggin' way, they is delicious."

Number one and number three, in a conversation, good.

"Hello gentleman." Techna said. "May I have a moment."

Commander Shepard and Kaptin Bluddflagg turned to Techna and smiled.

"Techna, howz it goin'? Iz Flora still thwumpin' gitz like it's no business?" The Ork proclaimed jovially, cigar still burning bright.

"Well, you see... She's in a bad mood."

"Say no more, we'll help." Shepard replied, standing up.

"Really, that easily?"

"Flora was a member of my crew, and still is. If she's in trouble, you can count on me."

"Me too." Bluddflagg stood up as well. "Once an Ork, always an Ork, even if ya iz not an Ork no more."

"Hairbrained logic by an Ork, no surprise there."

The three turned to see a red clad being go through the wall, disregarding physics entirely.

"Alucard, you owe me a shoota for wut you did back on that Tau planet." The Ork stomped towards the vampire.

"I suppose I do, don't I? I apologize, it's just that... I was focused on another fake ultimate being and I just couldn't resist knocking him down a few pegs, or a few hundred." Alucard laughed out loud, revealing his sharklike teeth.

"Master! Master!" A young looking women ran in from the side.

"What is it, Police Girl?" Alucard replied, smiling.

"You know Dante and Kratos?"

"Yes?"

"Well, they're about to fight."

"Ah, thanks for reminding me! If you'll all excuse me, I have a fight to watch."

Techna then looked at 'Police Girl.'

"Seras, right?"

"Hmm? Oh yes. I'm Seras Victoria. You must be Flora's girlfriend, Techna, right?"

"How'd you know?"

"Well, you got her scent all over you."

Techna quietly sniffed herself.

"It's not obvious for a non-vampire, but I definitely smelt her on you."

"I suppose. I suppose I should get to the point. It's about Flora."

"What's wrong?"

"She's in a bad mood-"

"Say no more, I'll help you. In fact, I think I have the perfect solution for her troubles."

"I doubt it unless you listened to the context of her feelings." Techna folded her arms.

"It works, trust me. I suppose that I should find a few of her other friends too."

Techna took out her list and saw something she didn't like to see.

"The ponies, including... Pinkie Pie?"

"Well, them too."

"I think I should talk to Flora more."

"Yeah yeah, lemme take you to one right now." Seras grabbed Techna's arm and dragged her to a gated battle arena.

On one side was a red trench coat wearing man with snow white hair, looking cocky and confident.

The other side had a buff man, with ash white skin and a red tattoo, scowling and obviously taking this seriously.

"Wait, Flora's friend is here?"

"Well, one of them. Met him when he replaced Alucard, and all vampires were demons instead."

"Sounds... Interesting." Techna replied.

"Alright then, ladies and gentlemen, who's ready for the fight event before we have tonight's game of Grifball?"

The crowd cheered.

"On this side, we've got the God of War, the killer of Titans, and the Ghost of Sparta, KRATOS!"

"RAAAHHHH!"

"And on this side, we have the Son of Sparda, the Half-Demon Demon Hunter, the sealer of Mundus, DANTE!"

"THANK YOU, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!"

"FIVE, FOUR, THREE, TWO, ONE, LET'S GET IT ON!"

The two charged at each other, and swords clashed in combat.

But Techna just didn't want to watch. There wasn't any incentive to care. She didn't know either of these people, and she wasn't watching a bloodbath, that's for sure.

"Hey, you lost?"

Techna looked at the announcer and spoke.

"Nah, Seras was showing me a friend my girlfriend knows."

"Hmm... And your name?"

"Techna."

"Duke Nukem." Duke replied. "Personally, I'm rooting for Kratos, but Dante is a good rival... Hold on... HAHA, DANTE PULLS OFF A PERFECT PARRY, BUT WHAT'S THIS, KRATOS THEN PERFORMS A GERMAN SUPLEX!"

"How exciting." Techna replied.

"Yep. Hey, are you from Alfea?"

"Yes, I am. Where'd you learn about it?"

"Some person named The Postal Dude, spread the word about Dio Brando in a dress."

"Ah, of course."

"Yep. If you want to know, I know the anchor from there."

"Perfect. I'm Flora's girlfriend."

Duke smiled and took out a cigar and lit it.

"She needs help?"

"Yeah, she does."

"I know a couple of people. Right now, look for other people Flora might know."

"Well, okay then Duke. Quick question though."

"What is it?"

"How did you meet her?"

"She was captured, Woke up, and then things went it's own way."

"Typical. Well, goodbye then."

Dante then crashed through the ceiling, and landed next to the two.

"RING OUT, KRATOS WINS!"

"Ugh, cheap." Dante rubbed the back of his head. He looked at Techna and smirked.

"You must be Techna."

"Uh, yes. You know Flora?"

"Pretty much. Taught her a few things."

"Hmm... I remember you now. She told me plenty about you."

"Good enough for me. So, are you here to chat, is something wrong with Flora?"

"She's just depressed."

"Hmm... You may not like this idea, but I got Pinkie Pie on speed-dial."

"NO!" Duke and Techna yelled at the same time.

"Relax, I'll make her Pinkie Promise that she won't go all Chaos God on you, or Sith Lord... or get Bowser to help with the decorations."

"Wait, Bowser?" Techna raised an eyebrow.

"Long story. Give me a few."

"Alright then. When you're done, go find the rest of Flora's friends, and we'll go meet out front. I've got five more people to find, and they're all likely in Alfea at this moment."

"Sure thing."

"Okay, thanks Joker." Shepard hung up from the com. "Alright, we'll use some FTL travel tech to reach Alfea and get your friends, sans Flora, correct?"

"Yes, Commander. I must say, Flora has met much more Loopers than I had originally thought."

"FEAR NOT, DEAR TECHNA! I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, SHALL JOIN YOU IN YOUR QUEST!"

"yeah, and i'm tagging along too" Sans replied, looking to the sides to see Undyne, Alphys and Toriel nodding in agreement.

The Normandy SR-2 soon appeared from the sky, landing softly next to the group.

"Alright guys, this isn't just a mission to help Flora, this is a mission to stabilize a Looper. Understand?" Shepard said.

"YEAH!" The majority of the group cheered.

"Good. Let's go."

Bloom stretched herself as she woke up. Not too long ago, the entire Winx Club (and Timmy) Woke up and decided to do whatever. It was Winter Holiday, so there was a hold on classes.

When she looked out the window, she got a look of confusion.

"Why's there a spaceship outside? Why's there a spaceship outside?!" Bloom got out of bed, got dressed quickly, and got outside quickly to find her friends (sans Flora) grouped up, staring at the ship.

"Why's there a spaceship outside!?" Bloom yelled.

"I don't know." Stella blinked.

Soon enough, the ship landed, and a ramp opened up. Shortly after, Techna appeared from the opening, along with Alucard and Bluddflagg.

"Hey girls, I've got a plan to help Flora, but I need your help!" Techna yelled from the ramp.

"An' we'z need all of youz to join us, so come an' join us!"

"Oh great, Orks." Bloom moaned.

"You got a problem with Orks?" Musa asked.

"Not with them personally, but the world they live in."

"How about we join Techna with whatever she needs?" Timmy asked.

The girls looked at Timmy, then the ship.

"Alright then, let's get to it." Aisha remarked.

"So, now we're going to Equestria to do what again?" Bloom asked.

"To get the Elements of Harmony bearers to join us and set up a major Christmas Party for Flora, with pizza, and beers and shooting ranges." Dante said, leaning back in his chair.

"Shooting ranges?" Bloom looked incredulously at the demon hunter as he gave no damns whatsoever.

"Well, from what I've heard from Flora, she's pretty good at being a soldier, even if she's not into it." Wrex said. "Especially considering what she did to Dio." Wrex laughed, with the others joining in.

"You mean Bloom."

"Wait, what?"

"Oh yeah, your Unawake self put Dio Brando, MLE, in a dress. Can't think of a more embarrassing failure than that." Garrus explained.

"I put an MLE in a dress?!"

"Bloom, you're more special than anyone would've thought, you know that?" Musa grinned.

"I'm sorry guys, I need time to-"

"Bloom, some Imperium Commissar named Yarrick is on the comm, I kinda need your help talking to him."

"Ugh... I'll be a minute." Bloom walked out of the room.

"Old man Yarrick... Shit... he's in the same space as we're in." Bluddflagg remarked. "Ha! Can't wait ta see him again."

"Right then..."

A phone rang out. Dante took out his phone and answered it.

"Dante speaking, what do you want? Dude? Stuck on Equestria you say? Why? OH... yeah Mad Cow Zombies everywhere? Heh, we're

actually on the way. How'd you- ..." Dante paused. "Got it. Thanks bro." Dante hung up after a few seconds. "Guys, we may need to fight a bit on Equestria, somehow The Postal Dude's enemies and The Dude himself teleported to Equestria and well... it's a free-for-all that's been contained in the Everfree forest."

"Well then, guess we're shooting." Duke stretched.

"I'm back guys. Yarrick's joining us, and so's Leman Russ. Did I miss anything?" Bloom asked as she walked back in.

"You want to kill Al Qaeda terrorists, Mad Cow Tourette Zombies and book protestors, Bloom?" Alucard asked, taking out his handguns and flashing a terrifying grin.

"...What."

Several hours, one fight scene and about ten minutes of showers later.

"Never again." Bloom said, drying her hair with a towel.

"Don'cha worry there, Bloom. We ain't happy 'bout this either." Applejack said, looking over the gather group of Loopers.

"Speak for yourself, that was pretty damn fun." Leman said, curbstomping a zombie.

"Inside the house, Leman Russ!"

"Sorry, mother."

"Right then..." Nyx looked over towards Techna. "So Flora's in a terrible mood?"

"Yes. I was looking for you guys since you're on the list of the apparently inaccurate list of Flora's Looper friends."

"Say no more. And Dante, I got your voice message." Pinkie Pie said, motioning the Pinkie Promise wordlessly.

"Good. So, here's the idea, we want to cheer up Flora... and we've decided to gather together and throw her a surprise party, with all the exciting stuff along with it." Dante smirked.

"Sounds like a delightful idea, Dante. You can count me in." Rarity said.

"And me!" Rainbow Dash added.

"And me." Fluttershy added.

"And us." Nyx said, hopping onto Twilight's head, who smiled in response.

"Ah shucks, guess Ah'm in too!" Applejack adjusted her hat.

"So, where's we throwing the party?"

"Celestia's friends with Princess Peach this loop, and the latter's Awake. I can set up a party there and get Bowser to stay away for the day." Pinkie said.

"How do you know Bowser?" Tali asked.

"He's my former college roommate."

"Wait, really?" The Dude looked around.

"Yes, really." Rarity quickly waved off The Dude. "Anyway, let's go on our journey. Shepard, Techna, how about you go get Flora while the rest of us go and set up the decorations? Hearth's Warming Eve is coming and I'd like it to be festive at the party."

"Christmas."

"Oh right, human holidays." Rarity rolled her eyes.

"Alrighty then, let's go!" Pinkie rushed into Yarrick's ship. Leman took a deep breath.

"Thank Father she made a Pinkie Promise." The group left, leaving behind the Normandy Crew and Techna. They went into the ship and got into their stations.

"Alright, where's Flora?" Shepard asked.

"Last she told me, she was going to hide out in San Francisco. Said she has Handsome Jack trying to 'rehire' her."

"Then we don't have much time. We must go before Handsome Jack finds her, or as the more likely option, Mister Torgue." Legion exclaimed.

"Mister Torgue." Techna muttered.

"Bad experience?"

"Hydrogen bomb to a sun, wiped out the entire sector of space I was in."

"...Joker, FTL it."

"You got it boss." Joker replied. "EDI, send a message to Flora saying that we need her to join us."

"Of course."

"Full speed ahead." The Normandy flew off, off to get Flora.

Musa tapped the checklist with her pen.

"Alrighty then. Decorations?"

"Check!" Twilight and Rainbow Dash said.

"Food and drink?"

"Across multiple diets." Dante said, handing the pizza guy some cash and walking the tall stack of pizzas to the large refreshments table.

"Entertainment... CHECK!" Musa tossed the checklist aside and scratched the turntable she was at.

"Hey, I'm on the turntables!" Vinyl yelled.

"Vinyl, please no." Octavia scorned.

"No way. It's me or her."

"Why not both?" Seras asked.

"NO!" Almost everyone from Alfea and Equestria yelled.

"Do we want to know?" Yarrick asked.

"No, you don't."

"Oh, mama mia." Mario rubbed his temples over the party happening.

"Flora, I'm glad you met a new friend, but now's not the time to talk about them." Techna half-yelled as the coms turned on.

"Come on Flora, I just want you to work with me again. I'll even offer you some... uh... how about a company jacket, absolutely free."

"No, Jack." Flora asserted herself.

"YEAH, LET HER GO ON ON HER OWN! SHE'S AN INDEPENDENT F*ING WOMAN, AND A PRETTY ONE AT THAT!"**

"Shut up, Torgue, you loudmouthed, protein-addicted, explosion addict!"

"WHAT'S THAT? I COULDN'T HEAR YOU OVER HOW AWESOME I AM!"

BOOM!

Mister Torgue then performed an air-guitar solo.

"Hey, Anger, you alright?" Riley Anderson asked.

"I'm... just... peachy."

"Oh man."

"Okay, I called Dante, and told him that we're running late. In the meantime... Garrus, are the cannons calibrated?" Shepard asked.

"I've already made the proper calibrations before this pick-up mission."

"Good, let's handle this!"

"Yeah, Bowser... I'm sorry, but you're not invited."

"Come on Pinkie, I'm amazing!"

"Yeah, no. The only person even worse than you right now is Handsome Jack."

"There's few people worse than Jack! And why's that guy here? He's a jerkwad!"

"Call it a favor."

"RAAAAAGH!" Bowser breathed fire.

"Look, I'll talk with the others, see if I can squeeze you in the list." Pinkie rushed over to Dante. "Can we let Bowser in the party?"

"Didn't you Pinkie Promise to-"

"Not let him help decorate, yes!"

At that moment, Dante facepalmed.

"Fine!"

"YAY!" Pinkie rushed to Bowser. "You and a +1 are on the list, but only if you Pinkie Promise not to capture the Princess, alright?"

"UGH... Cross my heart and hope fly, stick a cupcake in my eye. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm getting Jr." Bowser went on his own way.

"Twilight, how much are we looking in damages now that Bowser's in the party?" Aisha asked.

Twilight took out a calculator and a pair of glasses. After a few calculations, she said, "20 coins if we include curry."

"HA! Let me try my hand." Leman said, right before Kaptin Bluddflagg grabbed the Primarch by the ear and dragged him away from the kitchen.

"No. We'z not doin' that."

"Ow ow! Stop that!"

"I picked up a really good curry recipe. Let me try." Seras said.

"Alright, good." Twilight said. "We've got one more hour guys, let's get to it!"

"Thanks Doctor, but please get off our ship." Shepard said.

"You're bloody well welcome." Twelve said, grumpy. "I just dealt with being in the middle of a Dalek vs Chaos battle and now I want a vacation, so I'm going on vacation. Goodbye." The Doctor went back into the TARDIS and disappeared.

"So, you think Torgue and Jack are still going at it?" Tali asked.

"Most likely." Garrus replied.

The ship soon rumbled. Garrus flexed his mandibles, right before sighing.

"Scratch that, they're either dead, or they crash landed somewhere."

"Alright, let's just go to Castle Toadstool, or whatever it's called." Riley said.

"I must say, of all your Looper friends, she's the most mundane, even with her emotions Looping." Techna remarked.

"Well, you know, I'm allowed some normal friends once in awhile. Thanks for picking me up before Jack found me, I really don't like him. He used mutant sea bass. He irradiated them and threw them in a fish tank. It's... disgusting."

"There there, Flora... I've got a surprise for you."

"...A pleasant surprise?"

"Yep."

The *Normandy* landed in front of Peach's castle, and everyone felt the anticipation. The only two who were completely unaware of the party itself were Flora and her new friend, Riley. The group opened the bay doors and walked out.

"Alright Flora, just follow us, and you'll get your surprise," Techna said.

"What kind, again?"

Techna gave Flora a quick peck on the lips and said, "Like I said, pleasant." The group quickly walked their way to the front doors. Techna knocked and got no response.

Flora opened the door and walked in. "Hmm, dark room, smells like food... let me guess..."

The lights flicked on and everyone posed. "SURPRISE!"

Flora looked over the cast of people and noticed that most of them were people that Flora had befriended. She looked over to Techna and smiled.

"You sly little...hehehe... Wow."

"yep... all us... flora was it?"

"Uh yes. Who are you?"

"names sans. we heard you from the news about dio, and your rematch." sans shrugged. "so we figured, why not join in?"

"EXACTLY! I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, AM HONORED TO FINALLY MEET SUCH A MAJOR FIGURE IN THE LOOPS!"

"Well... how neat. And you don't seem excited."

"I was mostly dragged here since I couldn't do anything else," The Postal Dude said.

"Let me tell you, Flora, you've done a lot for us. Bloom did a lot too, but you made that possible since you're the Anchor. This party's all about you and the Christmas spirit. Pizza?" Dante opened up a box, revealing a Meat Lover's Pizza, which he quickly set aside and took out a more practical pepperoni pizza.

"Christmas... well, this is going to be fun," Flora said.

"Indeed. Look above you."

She looked above herself and saw mistletoe. She laughed.

"This is so corny."

"I know, but who cares?" Techna held Flora by her hands and the two shared a gentle kiss, which the others clapped for.

"Alright then, who'z ready fer a party?" Bluddflagg roared.

"You got it!" Vinyl said, starting off with a house track.

"Let's party?" Techna asked.

"Thanks Techna, you're the best. Let's party!"

"Shepard! Would you get over here!"

The commander walked up and asked, "What's the matter, Twilight?"

Twilight pointed at the radio. "As we were trying to tune into Nash's Christmas in the Multiverse Show, the entire bandwidth was hijacked by this!"

The radio volume went up, revealing a familiar bass metallic groaning as a monotone voice echoed across the airwaves. **"DECK THE PLANET WITH MOUNTAINS OF HOLLY. FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!"**

"Make him stop," Twilight pleaded with Shepard, who just smiled up into the atmosphere where a black spot could be seen if you squinted.

She said, "I'm so proud of him. He's come so far."

"No, Undyne, you're not allowed to cook," Toriel stated flatly as she glared at her fellow Looper.

"Aww, come on, Toriel! It'll be fine," Undyne whined. "I promise I won't blow everything up… much."

"We are guests here," the Boss Monster chided the warrior. "It is considered rude to set the house on fire when you're cooking. And knowing your track record…"

"It was JUST that one time! I was just trying to bake cookies in ten seconds!"

"You tried to harness all of the energy in the Core to bake cookies at a hundred thousand degrees. And that was only last Loop. Not to mention the time when you tried to reverse-engineer my Butterscotch and Cinnamon Pie recipe."

"That was-"

"You set the entire Waterfall village on fire, including the water. Alphys is still trying to figure out how you managed to do that."

"I don't know how, but it was awesome!" Undyne cheered, only to be cowed by Toriel's matronly disapproval instantly.

"And that is why I will not let you near the kitchen."

"Fiiine. You're no fun." Undyne pouted as she turned to leave the room.

"And stop pestering the Loopers to fight you!" Toriel called out.

"No promises on that!"

"Undyne, stop showing off!" Twilight pleaded as the fish in question began suplexing everything just because she could.

Undyne responded by suplexing a ball of stuff in the room. A confused dog was wondering why he was in the air.

"Undyne, PLEASE! Stop suplexing everything!"

"NEVER!" And with that, Undyne suplexed herself and the entire building.

Flora shrugged at the blatant violation of physics.

"We need a tree!" Pinkie Pie announced. "Let's play the tree hunting game!"

"How does that work?" Tali asked.

"Everyone has to find a tree, silly!" Pinkie Pie said. "Then we take the best tree and use it for the party!"

"Bet I can find a better tree than you can," Dante said with a smirk.

"Bet you can't," Aisha said with an answering grin.

"Three, two, one, go!" Pinkie announced. A veritable platoon of party-goers immediately deployed in search of the perfect tree for the party.

"Does the tree have to be one you found?" Flora asked.

"Well, if you didn't find it, how would you know where it was?" Pinkie Pie asked.

"I mean, is it okay if I make a tree?" Flora asked.

"Really?" Pinkie asked, her eyes going wide. "What kind of tree? A gumdrop tree?"

"Maybe after I Loop through Candyland," Flora said, unable to hold back a giggle. "It's alright then?"

"Yeppers!" Pinkie said.

Flora considered for a moment. "I should probably take this outside…"

The party-goers returned from their mission to inform the game master of their findings.

"That wasn't there when we left, was it?" Garrus asked.

"I think we'd have noticed," Musa said.

"Hey guys," Flora said, stepping out from behind the sequoia-sized pine tree that now graced the castle's lawn. "Do I win?"

"looks good to me." sans shrugged as he sipped some soda (the other Loopers flat-out ignored the fact he didn't have a stomach…). "but you never know. i think it's better than mine at least. i think it's safe to 'leaf' this competition 'up in the air' for a bit longer…"

"BEHOLD!" Papyrus boomed as he showed off his newest creation. It was a large… sort of tree? Instead of branches and pine needles, the entire tree was made from bones that were haphazardly held together by what seemed to be duct tape.

"... that isn't a tree, bro. trees are made from wood, not bone."

"IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH!"

After the chaos known only as the tree-hunting contest, the winning tree stood tall and mighty in the front lawn. It stood in silence, standing vigil as the party continued inside the castle behind it and the front yard it observed.

Yet something was missing.

Setback looked at the tree through a window, standing next to Guise, Riley, and Musa as he partook in holiday snacks. "You know," Setback said, speakingfirst, "This is a nice tree."

"Yeah, it is," Riley answered. "I wonder how Flora found it so fast."

"She has her ways," Musa commented.

Guise scoffed, the purple-clad egomaniac glaring at the tree. "It's not that good."

Setback looked at his fellow 'hero', a glass of punch in his hand. "Still salty about not finding a tree, Guise?"

"No!" Guise quickly spat out. Setback, Musa, and Riley each glared at him, and Guise rolled his eyes. "...Yes. But that's not the reason."

"Then why..."

"Look at it," Guise whined. The others did, gazing at the sequoia as Guise flailed his arms. "There's nothing on the tree! It's a naked tree! What kind of a Christmas Tree is a naked tree! I'll tell you what: It's a tree that isn't a Christmas Tree!"

Riley felt Fear's influence rising. "Um...where is this going?"

"I'll tell you where this is going!" Before anyone could say anything, Guise had quickly put on a silver garland sash and a Santa hat/beard combo. He slung a purple bag over his shoulder, and there was a huge pile of lights in his hands. "I, Santa Guise the great victor of the Thanksgiving/Christmas war, shall make that tree 100% awesome with my awesome Christmas Swag! SANTA GUISE AWAY!"

And with that, 'Santa' Guise bolted towards the door.

Setback looked at his drink, then back out the window. "Oh, what the hell." He laughed as he set his drink down. "Wait for me, Guise! I have tree decorations!"

As Riley and Musa watched Setback race after Guise, who had started to badly sing Christmas carols with reworked lyrics, the two girls looked at each other.

"What do you guys think?" Riley mentally asked her best friends.

"You have to ask!?" Joy enthusiastically shouted.

The Dude was taking a drink from his beer when the doorbell rang. He opened the door and saw a familiar face.

"Hey Dude, I heard there was a party and-"

The Dude closed the door on Gordon Freeman and walked away.

"Who was that?" Riley asked.

"Some guy who owes me $100."

"Why?"

"He used to buy drugs. It's been ten thousand Loops already, and he still hasn't ponied up... no pun intended."

"None taken," Fluttershy said, getting back into her conversation with Flora.

The doorbell rang again, and Toriel opened the door.

"Hey, is The Dude in there?"

"Go away, Gordon. I still am not forgiving you for what you did against Alphys."

"Aw, come ooooooon! I was needing a cocaine fix! And I was drunk!"

Toriel closed the door. Ten seconds later, the doorbell rang again, and Bloom opened the door.

"Hey, it's me and my plus one," Handsome Jack said, smoldering from the crash landing he was in and holding an unconscious (she hoped) Gordon Freeman in his arm.

Bloom promptly used a trick she learned from Captain Falcon and punched Jack into the hillside.

"Gordon again?" Flora asked.

"Jack found us."

"Thank you so much, Bloom."

"No problem. He's a bastard."

Almost everyone in the area agreed.

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sans stood by the snack table, eating snacks and drinking soda while watching the party go off. He was minding his own business when a young woman dressed in a fancy black strapless dress – Wraith, if he wasn't lazy enough to recall correctly – walk up to him. "Hello, sans," she greeted.

"hey," he answered back.

"Have you seen Setback?" she asked.

sans shrugged. "probably something festive," he replied. "i think i saw him and riley go outside a few minutes ago with the purple deadpool."

Wraith didn't like where this was going. "Pardon me. I need to go on Guise damage control." She quickly raced outside to do just that.

sans just shrugged and drank more soda.

The tree was currently being decorated by Riley, Musa, and Guise, while Setback dug through a rather large pile of stuff, obviously looking for something. Musa flittered up and down the tree, hanging lights as she soared around the tree.

Near the base, however, the process wasn't going quite as smooth as it was up top. "Guise, I don't think using glossy photos of yourself is a good idea for tree decorations." she told Guise.

He just scoffed, hanging up a small headshot of himself. "Hey, you're hanging up those weird memory snowglobe thingies you got out of your own head," he countered. "Same thing really."

"No, they're not."

"Yes, they are!"

"No, they're not."

"So, this is what you two are doing." Both Guise and Riley turned around to see Wraith standing behind them alongside the Nostalgia Critic looking at the tree.

"Hey guys!" Guise waved. "Don't worry I'm behaving like I said I would." He then quickly turned to Riley and spat out, "Yes, they are."

"Geez, that's looking pretty good," the Critic said out loud.

"And it'll get better." Guise raised up some candy canes.

Yarrick decided to get some fresh air and walked outside. Immediately afterwards, he saw the tree being dressed up in various decorations that he considered gaudy, and went back inside.

"Then again, I managed to survive without fresh air."

(Later on in the party)

Flora stepped out to get some fresh air, away from the gathered Loopers, only to look up and see a familiar reaper floating over the building. Flora blinked and waved. "Uh...hi!"

The reaper's bass background noise boomed as it lowered its red eye to Flora's level. **"CREATURE OF FLESH AND WING, YOU ARE SHEPARD'S NEWEST ASSOCIATE."**

"Uh, I guess."

The silence was awkward. In an effort to escape, Flora shouted and pointed into the sky, "Look, a missile!"

The silence was deafening. Sovereign turned its body slightly and asked, **"WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THAT?"**

Flora facepalmed. "Seemed like a good idea at the time."

Sovereign must have decided to ignore that as his booming speakers echoed for miles, **"WE DESIRE TO SPEAK TO YOUR ASSOCIATE CALLED TECHNA."**

Flora blinked, then replied, "Uh...yeah, let me get her for you."

After introducing the two of them, Flora returned to the party in time to run into Shepard. The commander held out a glass, which Flora quickly drank up.

Shepard chuckled. "Seems like you just met Sovereign. He's a handful at the best of times."

Flora sat down and replied, "Felt like my heart was going to fly out of my chest."

"That often happens. What did he want?"

"To speak with Techna."

Shepard blanched at the thought. Flora noticed this and held up her hand. "Techna's fine. She's stable... mostly."

"And if we implement the focusing crystals from the Death Star-" the female fairy replied.

This allowed Sovereign to finish, **"ALONG WITH BERRY'S FOOF AND A SIZABLE QUANTITY OF CHAKRA-"**

Flora paused in thought, then replied, "I better get back out there. Who knows what they'll brew up together."

"Let them have their fun." Garrus shrugged. "I never really understood why people liked Christmas so much. Besides, there's nothing like a good set of fireworks to make things interesting. I think I still have some chirality-neutral popcorn somewhere in my Pocket…"

Shepard snorted and waved Flora towards another section of the party. "Says the Turian who turned Andersen's Apartment into a fortress...several times."

Garrus had the decency to look a bit sheepish as his mandibles fluttered. "It was Javik's idea. You've got to admit though: Andersen's apartment was built to last. It makes some of the shelters on Palaven look like they're made out of tissue paper."

Flora raised her glass and clinked it with a spoon.

"I'd like to make a toast. For the love of my life, Techna, for making this party possible!"

"AWWWWW!"

"Thank you Flora. I'd also like to thank everyone who came or hosted for that and for being such good friends to Flora!"

The group cheered in agreement.

"Additionally, I'd like to thank Pinkie Pie for not going Chaos God on us."

"Hey, I don't always do that!"

"But you do do it often," Leman remarked.

"...Fair enough. Point is, thank you Techna!"

"Happy Holidays!" Techna raised her glass.

"HAPPY HOLIDAYS!"

"WOWIE, THIS PARTY WAS FUN!" Papyrus said.

"yep, but it's missing something." Sans' eye glowed briefly.

When Flora sat down on her chair, a loud farting noise blasted out. She quickly reached under her seat and found a whoopie cushion.

"there it is."

Flora pouted, then decided that it was funny after all and laughed.

"Techna, thank you. I feel much better."

"Yep. Still, I do wonder what other challenges face us."

"As long as we're together, I doubt anything will stop us."

"... You know what, you're right." Flora kissed Techna on the cheek, who smiled in return.

This was the best Christmas ever.

"Thanks for the suggestions, Santa. Everything fell into place, and now Flora's at a better level of stability. Makes me wonder why you run the gift shop instead of a terminal," Fand commented.

"What can I say? I just know how to make people happy." The jolly man left the room.

Fand swiveled in her seat and found a present. She opened it up to find a blank book. Inside was a chart of Loopers that were activated, with all the couples connected with sharpie marks.

It was then that Fand smiled.

Best gift ever!

A/N for this chapter by Awesomedude17: Merry Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight, because HOLY CRAP WAS THIS AWESOME TO WRITE!

Insert shameless plug for FNAF Loops here.

Author's Note from Firehawk242: First off, merry Christmas to everyone out there, and a big thanks to everyone who help write this. Special shout out to Awesomedude17 for coming up with and organizing this whole thing, and for doing most of the writing. You are living up to your screen name, dude. Special thanks to Purrs as well for her proofreading efforts. All hail the Grammar Queen of the Infinite Loops! You two are both awesome.

Second, I want to thank everyone who's been reading the compilation thus far. Winx is one of the younger branches of Yggdrasil, but we certainly don't act like it, and you guys are at least partially to thank for that. We've gotten a lot written over the first six months of the loop's existence, and I'm looking

forward to seeing a lot more in its future. To the Fairies of the Yggdrasil!

Third... I don't really have a third actually, but everything's better in threes, or so I've been told.

Merry Christmas all, and on with the show!

Chapter 17

16.1 (lord Martiya)

"Come on girls, let's make this a Friendly Trix Loop!" Musa asked her friends, all Awake. "Timmy should get to see them Friendly too, this way he'll stop loathing them so much."

"I don't know…" Bloom said. "Maybe we should ask him first, and-"

"We don't have time, look where we are."

The Winx, plus Aisha (who later would complete the paperwork to get in Alfea now), were in fact close to the site of their first battle with the Trix, and exactly at that time.

And just like that the Trix came out of the street… And then, after giving the Winx a glare, turned and left.

"OK, what just happened?" Stella asked.

There was no answer, as her friends were just as shocked.

People tended to be surprised when they found out that Aisha was an amateur boxer, and confident enough in her outfighting skills she would bring that, and not her awesome dancing, to the talent portion of Miss Magix. Then again she also had a habit to get into potentially dangerous situations, and boxing swarming-style allowed her to punch problems while using her footwork from dancing to escape retaliation.

Hence why she still enrolled a boxing gym, and was coming from there when she returned to Alfea with a shocked expression.

"Aisha? What happened?" Flora asked her friend.

"Darcy enrolled at my gym." Aisha whispered.

A couple seconds of shock later, the other Winx started laughing. Sure, Darcy kept herself in shape and, like her sisters and indeed anyone from Cloudtower, had some meelee skills, but actually going to learn how to beat up people for fun and sport? She already had magic for that!

Then Aisha produced the picture she had taken, proving that she was not joking.

"And she was hitting the bag like it had insulted her mother." she continued.

"What the hell?" Musa said, summing up what everyone was thinking.

Stella was shopping for her incoming date with "Sky" (they had decided to wait to unmask them) when she saw Stormy with Mirta and Lucy. Staying between her and a couple of tough guys she was insulting in a way that reminded Stella about that "Sergeant Hartman" character from a movie Bloom had showed her once, only without a single profanity. And it still drove the tough guys to cry.

"See what some confidence and a couple kind words can do?" she heard Stormy say. "Remember you two, if you want to be good witches you must be confident and proud, not timid and shy! Now let's go, I'm gonna get you confident or kill you trying!"

"S-shouldn't that be 'die trying'?" Mirta asked.

"I know EXACTLY what I said, Pumpkin Head. You and Nosey will become proud and confident witches and live your potential or DIE!

Mirta and Lucy gulped.

"At least you managed to talk back. Now move!"

After a few seconds of shock, Stella wondered out loud: "Was Stormy trying to be helpful?"

Then again, there was a rational explanation. Griffin must have asked the Trix to get her most talented freshgirl confident, and Stormy had been faster to grab the deal. And that explained why Darcy had taken up boxing: venting the frustration from the disaster she was obviously expecting.

Yes, that must be it.

Bloom had been back to Earth, coming back to foil the scam against her mother as usual, when she stumbled on Selina. Who in this Loop had been a girl Bloom had babysitted, and became her only friend after Mitzi ruined her social life.

"Bloom, where have you been? You've missed Mitzi's fall!" her younger friend told her.

"Well, I-" Bloom started to reply, but then she registered her friend's words. "What do you mean Mitzi's fall?"

"Three girls, one with long white hair, one with longer brown hair and one with a stormcloud for hair, well, these three girls showed up at school and confronted her on how she was a horrible sister and swore they'd make her pay, and the next day the teachers finally took her up to task for cheating, her boyfriend dumped her, and things went worse until she got tarred and feathered and ran out of school!"

OK, the Trix had came to Earth and ruined Mitzi for being a horrible older sister, and depending on how much spare time they had they may have psychologically tortured her some more. For all the strange things they were doing lately it was nice finding out they still did something they usually did, irresponsible siblings were something that just ticked them off. Still, how did they know?

The Winx had been summoned to Faragonda's office, to be asked if they knew anything about the ice statue of Bloom (or Flora, it wasn't clear) that had appeared in the courtyard that night, or the sign telling "I sabotaged Princess Stella's chemistry set, punish me!" strapped on it.

"I think it's actually a Cloudtower student that really looks like me…" Bloom replied.

Faragonda checked with a spell, and found that yes, under the ice there was a living, no, DYING being. Who, for once, the Trix had apparently caught sabotaging their lab and decided to take justice in their own hands.

Musa was wandering around Magix City when she passed near a familiar coffee shop. The same one where in the baseline Icy tried to have her lynched. And looking in she noticed something equally familiar. Coming closer, she saw that yes, Darcy and Riven were at a table, much earlier than usual. And, as she should have expected, Icy and Stormy showed up, the former accusing her of spying.

"I'm not spying…" she replied, prepared for a chance to try and leave Icy speechless.

"Really? 'Cause Icy is an expert at spying." Stormy pointed out. Unusual words, but with the usual sarcastic tone. One moment now, and she could try that new insult.

"Look, Musa, from girl to girl, it's better if you stay away from Riven." Icy said. "He's just not good for you, it would end badly."

Musa looked at Icy almost as she had unzipped herself and revealed to be Lupin. For a moment she HOPED it was Lupin. But it was the real Icy. The Ice Witch. Who was actually trying to be nice.

That was when Musa reflexively blasted Icy away with a sound spell and ran away screaming in horror.

Icy rose up, seething in rage and about to command a chase… Then she noticed that, of all the witnesses, only Stormy wasn't trembling in fear, running away screaming, or had just fainted.

"You have a reputation, sister." Stormy explained.

The Winx and Timmy were sneaking around Cloudtower with the intent to find out just what the Trix were up to. There couldn't be any other explanation: this Loop they had somehow found out early a lot of information about Bloom and were planning something horrible. Otherwise, why would Icy try and be nice to someone who, this Loop, was not only an almost complete stranger but also a fairy? Especially with no reason at all…

Anyway, hiding from Griffin's surveillance had been easy, by now they knew everything in her book better than she did. Getting inside the Trix' room was a bit more difficult, as they had upped their security and got creative doing so. Yet, they entered, and found that the room was much larger than they remembered… And that the Trix were waiting for them.

"So, you switched the prince and his double for the computer freak?" Stormy said as a greeting.

"Come on, he's a better choice than the idiot and his conscience." Darcy chided her.

"Sisters, don't scare our guests. Guests, sit down and listen, for you have no idea what you're dealing with." Icy said.

The group fanned out to fight when Darcy blew a strong wind at them, Stormy a snowstorm, and Icy threw a fireball.

"Last chance: sit." Icy ordered.

The Winx did as instructed. For now it was better following their instructions, because for once they had no idea what the Trix could

do. Sure, Darcy using wind was easily explained as telekinesis on air, tricky but doable, and a snowstorm was a weather condition that Stormy could create from nowhere, but Icy manipulating fire? That was a first, and they had no rational explanation on how she could do that.

"Now, I suppose you're here because you feel targeted by us, the greatest senior students of Cloudtower, and the ones with a reputation for doing horrible things to anyone pissing them off, and you have no idea why we should deign to smite you little girls." Icy said.

"Aside from the fact they exist." Stormy quipped.

"Thing is, we're not planning anything bad for you." Darcy interjected. "We're just trying not to waste our second chance trying to murder you and taking over the Magical Dimension."

"What?" Musa asked, hoping she had understood what was happening. Timmy, on the other hand, hoped he had NOT.

"Long story short: Bloom's actually the younger princess of planet Domino and the bearer of the Dragon's Flame, sent away for protection when the Three Ancestral Witches devastated the planet, to prove we were better than our Ancestors we tried to steal that power and succeeded, and went completely crazy and evil beyond pragmatic." Icy said. "So we tried to take over the universe, failed because Bloom took back her powers, and started working for increasingly evil or insane villains until Aisha's fish cousin made us realize what monsters we had become… Too late."

"We couldn't get back into society, so we tried again to take over the universe, and got trapped in a book to think about what we did wrong. And torment the book's creator for trying to get us killed." Stormy continued.

"And then one day, after a few other shenaningans we found ourselves back in this room, with all our power and experience. A

second chance from the Great Dragon or another deity. One we're not going to waste." Darcy finished the tale. "So, just for thAUGH!"

That was when Musa jumped and hugged Darcy, happy that her not-girlfriend had finally got to Loop.

"What the hell?!" Stormy shouted.

"It's a long and strange story…" Flora said, before starting the explanation of the Loops.

"So, let me sum this up." Icy said, strangely calm. "The universe is actually a branch of a multiversal tree that's actually a computer, something broke said computer and to save it the gods are putting everything in a loop, with an Anchor who always remembers everything and other people who sometimes remember and sometimes don't?"

"Yes." Flora simply replied.

"You are our universe's Anchor, mainly because Bloom has the temper of a dragon, right?"

"Yes."

"And people close to those who are already Looping have a better chance to start Looping themselves?"

"Yes."

"Do you have any idea how much mileage I'm getting on sisterly tease out of this?" Icy asked pointing at Musa, still attached to a blushing Darcy. "Or the amusement potential out of Tecna, you and your former boyfriends?"

Flora facepalmed. Sure, she was happy that the Trix could really be better as she had told Kyubey once, but apparently some things

never changed.

"Just-just try and not destroy the universe again…" she said. "Musa, it's late. We're better go back at Alfea before Griselda finds out we're out at night."

"Wait a minute, there's still something I don't get." Stella interjected. "Where did Icy's fireball come from?"

"Valtor." Icy said. "The guy had a sick sense of humour…"

16.2

Bloom sat on a bench out in Alfea's quad.

"Hi, I'm-"

Bloom turned to the girl who had just spoken and held out a clipboard with a form attached. "Fill out your name, age, power, and relationship to myself or one of the other Winx, then go sit in the Great Hall and wait for the number on your form to be called."

"What?" the pink haired girl asked.

"Fill out the form, sit in the Great Hall, and wait for your number to be called," Bloom repeated. "Trust me, we didn't want to do this, but with all the long lost siblings, children from the future, and missing parents that have started crawling out of the woodwork, we needed to institute a system. Now go on, because I think the next one's coming over."

The rather confused time traveling child of Bloom and Timmy made her way towards the Great Hall as her half-brother by way of Brandon presented himself to their mother. He too was given a form and a number.

"You think that was the last one?" Stella asked.

"I really hope so," Musa said, staring out at her supposed progeny and the three and a half tables they occupied. "Why are they *all* named Melody? Not only is that horribly unimaginative, but it's like a human naming their kid Earth! I would never do that to a child of mine!"

"At least you don't have to deal with an entire battalion of people claiming to be your parents," Techna said. "Some of them don't even look like me! And I really don't want to know how that android and his fairy wife are supposed to have conceived me. I really don't."

"Better than the ones who claim I was somehow born from a flower," Flora said, shaking her head. "That's just plain weird."

"You want weird?" Bloom asked. "I swear that half of them claimed to have the Dragon Fire. That's not how it works!"

"I take it we all agree that this loop sucks?" Aisha asked.

"Yes."

"Yep."

"Definitely."

"Yeah.

"Yes."

"Good," Aisha said. "Then let's finish this loop and agree to never speak of this again."

16.3 (jxz)

The town was in flames.

Zombie-like creatures roamed the streets and destroyed everything on their wake to get their sweet Overdrive.

Everything was being destroyed.

And, above all this, two beings, a senient virus and a fairy, watched this, one with sadistic glee, other with resignation.

"Let me guess, we'll have to kill those things?" Flora asked Alex.

The virus only nodded, pointing at a Blower who was mauling someone. "Did you see what that OD did to Mercer?!"

"Wait, aren't you-"

"It seems that, this time, I'm a virus created by Mercer's DNA and a contaminated batch of OverCharge." Alex said, as he slashed a Winger that was flying nearby him. "And before you ask, yes, he was still an asshole."

Flora sighed. When she Awoke, she had groaned for the job of janitor she had, true, but she didn't want to do that. "Ok... I'm not in the mood to go full vampire, but I'm also a bit low in ammo on a lot of my weapons..." She said, as she shot a Popper that had somehow reached them, and using her magic to stop the Overcharge from soaking her.

"Huh? Really? That's new, a looper with guns and without ammo." Alex said, as he impaled a few more Wingers.

"Techna asked me for a lot of ammo. She says that she wants to make it self-replicating, so I don't need to ask for more ammo." She sighed, just as she killed a Herker that was trying to kill an innocent person. Then, she managed to grab a gun that had been thrown by another Herker... Or rather, the man that was being mauled by the abomination. She looked the gun. It was some kind of blunderbuss combined with an aerosol spray and a pair of... spheres under the body.

She stared at the gun for a while. Then she sighed. "Really? Does it have to look like this?"

"Huh. So that's why they said this is Duke's favorite loop."

"Figures..." Flora sighed and landed in front of an OD, distracted by a vending machine of OverCharge. "Ok, let's test this..." She shot at the zombie-like creature, who was promply burned and severly hurt. With anoter shoot, the monster was already dead.

Flora grinned. Even she didn't like to use guns, she had grown to see how powerful they were. "That was... Incredible!"

"I have to admit, that COULD harm me. Not much, but harm me nonetheless." Alex said, as he thre his fist under the earth, and impaling a lot of ODs nearby when the spikes came out. "So, suicide and probably Eiken, or are we gonna see what's in this place?"

Flora looked at the gun, then at Alex. Then she grinned. "Let's see what Sunset City has to offer, ok?"

Alex only grinned, and the two loopers set off to kill monsters.

16.4 (Awesomedude17)

Techna moaned as she woke up with a major headache. She had only Woken up a few hours ago and suddenly felt a lot of pain. When she looked around, she saw Stella.

"What happened?" Techna asked.

"Short answer, a wizard did it."

"Long answer?"

"Harry Dresden, private eye wizard, has an anti-tech aura or something, and when he came close to you... Let's just say Flora's

not going to squeeze the life out of him now, but will slap him with her full vampire strength."

"Can I at least prove to Flora that I'm alright?"

"Depends on whether she's holding back on hurting someone."

"After that party we threw a while ago, I doubt she's not holding back... I hope."

"... So, I'll tell her the good news." Stella left, leaving a bedridden Techna.

Once again, I pissed off a powerful Looper, second only to the girl who put Dio Brando in a dress, which, mind you, is hilarious, no matter how much he deserves it, which if anything, is getting off lightly.

So here I was, staring down Nature Incarnate and I thought to myself, 'Even people affected by Jinx have better luck than I do, which is saying something.'

"Dresden, I'm going to say this only once, if Techna doesn't wake up, you'll wish you never had come here."

"Pretty sure short-circuiting your girlfriend was enough of a reason to say that myself." I'll admit, I could've been better there. Hey, I may be an old Anchor, but Hell hath no fury like an Anchor who's pissed off enough to spontaneously decide to sprout the seeds in my stomach and turn them into fully grown plants. I've died enough painful deaths already, I really don't want to scratch one more off the list.

A blonde one came soon after that threat and gave the good news, the tech girl was alright!

Flora turned to me and said one word.

"Leave."

I decided to obey, or whatever more dignified word exists. I knew various embarrassing events that happened over the loops, being slapped by a fairy is one I don't want, even if she's part vampire...

I always have the worst luck.

16.5 (Awesomedude17)

Stella walked into Big Mac's bar, barely holding back the urge to vomit.

"Brain Bleach?" Mac assumed.

"And an Obliviate." Stella sat down.

"What happened?"

"Papa Nurgle in Flora's clothes... Him in Flora's clothes! HE WORE FLORA'S CLOTHES AND SAID HE FELT PRETTY WHEN HE WOKE UP! TZEENTCH VOMITED ON SIGHT! AHHHHHHHHHH!" Stella slammed her head on the counter, denting it and producing a fresh laceration on her forehead.

Mac sighed and took out an entire large bottle of Brain Bleach.

"On the house."

Stella began to down the whole bottle.

16.6

"So," Jack said. "Anyone know anything about the new girls we picked up?"

"Shepard knew them," Thane said. "Perhaps they were from the original Normandy?"

"No," Garrus said. "I've never seen them before."

"Shepard's time in the Alliance Military perhaps?" Samara suggested.

"Not old enough," Mordin responded. "Physical appearance suggests late adolescence. Too young to have enlisted. Relatives, perhaps? No, neither individual bears genetic similarities to Shepard. Children of friends? Possible. Will require further research."

"Wonder why he decided to recruit them?" Jacob said. "We're looking for the best of the best. I'm not seeing it from those two."

"They kept mentioning powers," Miranda said. "I would guess they're powerful biotics."

"No," Mordin said. "Signature wrong. Mass effect not found in the individuals. Unique biological systems though. Metabolic function unusual. Heightened energy production and consumption. Very efficient, but use unclear. Will require further study."

"So we've picked up a couple of freaks?" Jack asked. She grinned. "Awesome."

"What, did you get tired of being the strangest thing on this ship?" Kasumi asked with an answering grin.

"Big talk from the freaky ninja chick," Jack said.

"Enough, both of you," Garrus said.

"I don't think they're just biotics," Tali said. "The taller one, Techna, she knows her computers."

"Oh?" Miranda asked.

"Confirmed," EDI chimed in. "Techna has been most helpful in updating the Normandy's systems. My cyberwarfare suite has received an estimated two hundred percent increase in effectiveness."

"She's been on the ship for less than six hours!" Tali exclaimed in disbelief.

"Confirmed," EDI said. "She has also improved the Normandy's targeting computer. Initial estimates show an increase of thirty seven percent in accuracy."

"She's a sorceress then," Garrus said. "I would have said that was impossible."

"Consensus achieved," Legion stated. "Such a feat is impossible with current technology."

"You should tell her that, not me," Zaeed said. "Still, if she's making this easier for us, I'm all for it. All the money with half the risk."

"Do you know where they're staying?" Kelly Chambers asked. "I didn't think we had room for two more crew members."

"Their quarters are down on the cargo bay level," EDI stated. "An unused space was converted for their use."

"They're staying in the same room?" Miranda asked.

"They requested it," EDI said.

"They're dating," Kasumi said with a smirk.

"How do you know that?" Grunt asked.

"Now, now, I'm not about to reveal my secrets," Kasumi said.

"Just everyone else's," Miranda said.

"So we know what this Techna's doing here," Jacob said. "Some sort of biotic tech genius. But what's Flora doing here?"

"Commander Shepard's behavior patterns indicate that Flora is dominant individual of the two," Mordin said. "Theorize that Flora serves as leader with Techna in support role. Freelance mercenary work a possible explanation."

"They're a bit young to be mercs," Jacob said.

"True, but I'm not hearing any better ideas," Garrus said.

"Their discussion indicates that they are most likely older than they appear," EDI said.

"Fascinating," Mordin said. "Speculation, they are not pure strain humans."

"Genetically modified you mean?" Garrus suggested.

"Maybe," Miranda said. "It doesn't add up though. I'm genetically modified, but that has limits."

"Possible results of classified experiment," Mordin said. "May be illegal. Remarkably well-adjusted if true. Will require further study."

"I'm still confused about something one of them said," Kelly commented. "They said something about wings."

"In reference to a ship, perhaps?" Garrus suggested.

"No," Kelly said. "It sounded like they had personal wings. Like... birds, or maybe butterflies."

"Butterflies?" Jacob asked.

"Yeah," Kelly said. "Like fairy wings."

"Fairy wings?" Garrus asked skeptically. "You think they're creatures from human myth."

"Maybe?" Kelly said. "Have you seen them? The way they carry themselves? The way they talk and act? It's otherworldly."

"I think you're just daydreaming," Jacob said. "They're human."

"You want to put your money where your mouth is?" Jack said. "I'm with Kelly. They're not human."

"You're one to talk," Jacob said. "Fine. Fifty credits on them being human biotics, maybe with genetic modification."

"I'll take that bet," Jack said. "My bet's on them being an undiscovered alien species."

"I'll stick with my fairies," Kelly said. "Count me in."

The Normandy SR-2's mess quickly devolved into a betting ring, with Garrus somehow roped into serving as the bookie.

"Did you get it, EDI?" Joker asked.

"Confirmed, Mister Moreau. I am transmitting the recording to your Omni-tool."

"Thanks, EDI," Joker said. "Oh, I am going to have fun with this. Hey, could you send a copy to Shepard too? He loves this sort of stuff."

"Confirmed," EDI said. "Would you like me to forward a copy to our new crew members as well?"

"Sure, why not," Joker said. "Bet they'll get a kick out of it too."

"Confirmed," EDI stated. "Mister Moreau, do you possess any knowledge of our new recruits?"

"Lots," Joker said. "Ah, watching them try to figure it out is going to be so much fun!"

"Would you be willing to provide any of this information to the crew?" EDI asked.

"What, and ruin the show?" Joker asked. "Not a chance. I'm having too much fun with this."

"Understood, Mister Moreau," EDI said.

"Kelly's going to make out like a bandit on that one," Shepard said, chuckling as he shook his head fondly.

"She always gets it first," Flora said. "I have no idea how she does it."

"She's observant," Shepard said. "Ah. It sucks having just Joker and the two of you Awake, but watching the unAwake others try to figure out loop weirdness never fails to entertain."

"It is rather amusing," Techna said. "So, off to deal with the Collectors now?"

"Assuming you're done putting the Normandy back together, then yes," Shepard said.

"I always clean up after myself," Techna said.

"Only after I remind you a few times," Flora said good-naturedly.

"I still get it done," Techna said.

"So the Normandy *is* ready to go," Shepard said.

"Yes," Techna said. "We're ready to move."

"Alright," Shepard said. "Then let's get to work."

16.7

"I don't understand why the Admins picked one of you to be our Anchor," Icy said. "They should have picked a witch."

"What, like you?" Musa asked. "Please, without help you'd go nuts in under a hundred loops. Two hundred, tops."

"Ha!" Icy snorted. "I'm tougher than any of you fairies could ever hope to be! You're only stronger than me right now because you're older, but that'll change soon enough!"

"I wouldn't count on it, Icy," Aisha said. "I really don't think you're catching up to Flora."

"Please," Icy said. "There's no way I'd ever lose to someone as soft as her!"

Bloom spoke up. "Icy, Flora's taken on-"

"Wait," Flora said, cutting off the fire fairy. "I want to hear this. Icy, you say that witches are tougher and better than fairies, right?"

"Of course we are!" Icy said. "Isn't it obvious? Anything a fairy can do, a witch can do better!"

"Then you won't mind proving it, will you?" Flora offered.

"Not at all!" Icy said. "Name your challenge!"

"Hmmm," Flora said. "How about you audit one of Alfea's classes, my choice. See what it's like being an Alfea student for a day."

"I can pass any of your wimpy school's classes in my sleep!" Icy said.

"Good," Flora said. "Let's get started."

"Welcome to Black Mud Swamp," Flora said as she and the ice witch disembarked from the ship they'd taken here.

"I know what this place is," Icy said. "What am I supposed to do?"

"Simple," Flora said. "Get out using nothing but your wits, the clothes on your back, and listening to nature."

"Magic?" Icy asked.

"Forbidden," Flora said. "Any use of magic for this test is an automatic failure."

"All I have to do is get out?" Icy asked, skeptical.

"Yep," Flora said. "Well, assuming you survive."

"What do you mean survive?" Icy asked.

"Nope, can't tell you," Flora said. "By the way, the clock's about to start, so I need to get back to Alfea. Watch out for the swamp gas though. The treatment potion doesn't keep very well, and brewing up a new batch takes hours." With that, the nature fairy returned to the ship. "Take us out of here, Timmy," she said.

"Yes ma'am," Timmy replied with a grin. The ship lifted off, leaving Icy alone in the swamp.

"Treatment for the swamp gas?" Icy asked. "What exactly did she mean by that?" A few feet from her, a bubble of swamp gas erupted. A frog that had strayed to close was caught in the cloud. When the noxious fumes passed, the luckless amphibian had been turned to stone.

"Petrification," Icy remarked. "Wonderful."

"How long has it been?" Flora asked, looking up from her book.

"Seven hours and twenty three minutes," Techna said.

"How's she doing?" Stella asked.

"Well, she's headed in the right direction at least," Techna said, glancing down at her monitoring device. "Finally."

"What's the longest time recorded to still earn a passing grade?" Musa asked.

"You should know," Techna said. "After all, we set it. Two hours and forty six minutes is the record."

"And we had extenuating circumstances," Flora said. "If she's not back in another hour we'll have to go and get her."

"I think she'll make it out before that," Techna said. "Assuming she doesn't make any more major mistakes at least."

"Assuming," Musa said.

"I'm sorry Icy, but your time of eight hours and twelve minutes means you get a failing grade," Flora said.

"Bite me, Flower girl," Icy said. The ice witch lay flat on her back, her chest heaving as she struggled for air. Her hair was tangled and filled with thorns, twigs, leaves, and dirt. Her clothes were covered in mud and slime, and her left shoe was missing. "That wasn't a class! That was an overly complicated method of murder! If that is a class, it's gotta be some super-advanced nature fairies only thing, which is not a fair pick!"

"Actually, every Alfea student goes through this course," Techna stated. "It's the traditional first field exercise for freshman fairies."

"No way," Icy said. "There is no way that a bunch of freshman fairies go through this. It would kill them!"

"It's true," Flora said. "We've all been through it."

"No way," Icy repeated. "The animals are poisonous and aggressive, the plants try to eat you if you make so much as a sound, and the freaking swamp gas turns you to stone! There's no way this is a regular part of your curriculum!"

"I can guarantee you that it is," Flora said. "So. Still think fairies are soft?"

"Bite me."

16.8 (Awesomedude17)

"Stella?"

"Yes Aisha?"

"Mind explaining why you have a cult of solar system worshippers from various loops this loop?"

"No idea. I hated it at first, then liked it, then hated it again."

"WE HAVE FOUND THE SUNSTONES AND MOONSTONES YOU REQUIRED STELLA!" Princess Luna and Luna Lovegood yelled out from the other room.

"Bunch of weirdos, Aisha, bunch of weirdos." Stella left to her crowd of Unawake loopers tangentially related to her powers.

"Kotal Khan, we don't need to blood sacrifice Darcy, STOP THAT NOW."

"I think I should help. I think I will." Aisha walked to the door, when a nasty sounding fight broke out. She peeked at the group.

"Solar empire!"

"Lunar republic!"

"I have to help now."

"Gee, you think?" Stella moaned as she tried to comb her now frazzled hair.

16.9 (lord Martiya)

"Soon! Soon we'll show them who is the toughest!" Icy declared to her sisters. Who barely cared.

"Seriously, what's your problem?" Darcy asked. "We have a universe of knowledge to discover and idiots to torment, and you still want to take on the Winx?"

"My problem, that should be yours too, is that Flora's the Anchor. The little softie, and not a witch."

Resisting the temptation to point out what had happened with the field exercise, Stormy decided to explain what her sister had somehow missed: "Seriously, what makes you think anyone would be a better Anchor? Things here are all about the Dragon's Flame and they need someone stable and calm, and guess who's the calmest person who had it even for a while?"

"Darcy, of course." Icy replied.

"Exactly. One of the most manipulative people around, who learned how to ride a windrider, use fire magic and augment her strength just for the potential damage and healing to annoy everyone who thinks witches shouldn't learn that."

Icy looked at her sister for a while, then said one word: "So?"

"WHAT?!"

"I get it. NOW I get it, I said that just to see your face. But it's still annoying."

"Then we should wait for a Loop where we can cut loose, or one with a skilled therapist." Darcy pointed out.

"And in the meantime we could show the Winx up." Stormy proposed. "Like by getting the entire school to loop."

"What?" her sisters asked. Then, after Stormy explained her idea, Icy could only say one thing: "I never thought I'd say it… Stormy, you're a genius. Darcy, call your not-girlfriend and tell her what we're about to do."

"Technically, they actually did it." Musa said.

"Just-I just hope they'll stop acting out for a while." Flora replied, unsure if she should cry or laugh hysterically.

In the meantime, the school of Cloudtower continued to fly in a loop.

Author's Notes:

16.1: And the Trix are now looping! Why do I have a sudden sense of dread?

16.2: Attack of the fanfiction cliches!

16.3: An earlier loop. Also, sucks to be a zombie right now.

16.4: Harry has horrible luck, especially where fae are concerned.

16.5: There's a story behind this one, but you're better off not knowing. Trust me, you don't want to know.

16.6: Watching non-loopers deal with loop weirdness never fails to entertain.

16.7: Underneath all the glitter and cheer, Alfea would make one heck of a boot camp.

16.8: I don't even...

16.9: Sense of dread surging...

16.1 cont. (lord Martiya)

Darcy was on the top of Cloudtower, looking down and thinking about what had happened with Musa, and how affectionate the fairy had been. Truth to be told she hadn't minded too much, even Icy would like some affection-from those she could trust. And she knew little to nothing of THIS Musa. And think of the devil…

"Hey, Darcy." the fairy of music said as she walked to her side.

"Hey." Darcy replied. "How did it even happen? I mean, I know that we're more similar than most are comfortable with, but how did you get over me trying to fry your brain and everything else?"

"Would you believe me if I said I envied you?"

"Depends…"

"Well, you were there, coming from a family even more broken than mine, yet always calm and in control… I envied you. And admired too. And so I decided to get to know you every time I could."

"You're crazy, you know that?" Darcy deadpanned.

"And that's why you're gonna tolerate me and give me a chance?"

"Only if you stop stealing my words."

"Thanks."

Musa hugged Darcy again, and left before the witch could even think to protest.

"Seriously, that fairy…" she said.

"She's a keeper, isn't her?" Aisha said as she flew up.

Darcy was impressed at the fairy for sneaking up on her. Not that she'd admit it. "What do you want?" she asked.

"You know, Musa's my best friend, so I'm warning you: hurt her, and I'll make you wish you never started Looping."

"What if I wasn't into girls?"

"You know exactly what I mean. Be friendly, be her lover, as long as you don't try and manipulate her I'm OK with it. But if you try and do something funny, or allow Icy to do it…" at that point Aisha hit her left hand with her right fist "My last Loop was as the son of the greatest boxing heavyweight champion of the world in the history of that universe, with the skills to surpass him. The previous one was as the monster boxer who killed the champion in an exhibition match after he retired and got out of shape, the one before that was former legbreaker who finally defeated that champion, avenged him and trained his son, and finally the one before that was as the champion himself. Don't try anything funny on Musa, or I'll start by punching you until you die and then I'll get creative. Are we clear?"

"Crystal. Just a question…"

"Yes?"

"What should I do with Riven? I got over him a while ago, this Loop I was only dating him so that Musa wouldn't suffer from that relationship…"

Chapter 18

17.1

"Nature's Wrath!" Flora declared, flinging her hand out. A wall of foliage responded, surging forwards to strike at her opponent. Before it could impact, however, a massive spherical burst of fire tore it apart, rendering it harmless. A multicolored beam of light shot back at the nature fairy, forcing her to dodge.

"Impressive, but not very subtle," the other spellcaster said. "Not everything can be beaten with brute force."

"Liana Chain!" Flora responded. Vines burst from the ground around her foe, cocooning the other looper.

"No, no, no," the spellcaster said, freezing the vines imprisoning her before shattering it effortlessly. "You keep trying to force a direct confrontation between us. Magic duels are not decided by strength alone! Subtlety, adaptability, flexibility! Think outside the box!"

"That's not how my powers work," Flora said.

"That's not how you *think* your powers work," the other caster said. "Big difference."

"Eternal Wind," Flora said. A gust of wind laced with razor sharp leaves hurled itself at the other caster.

"Better," her opponent said. "Some variation at least." A wedge of force split the oncoming stream of air, forcing it to pass harmlessly to either side.

"Spiraling Ivy!" Flora declared. Massive vines glowing with power surged upwards, spiraling around the elder looper. They rose into the air, then rushed downwards, intent on slamming the other caster into the ground.

"This again?" the caster asked with a frown. "You already tried this." Bolts of lightning lashed out at the vines, first halting their advance, then beginning to burn them back.

"Nature Surge," Flora said, making a quick gesture with her hand. Another vine burst from the ground, directly beneath the other caster. Startled, she lost her hold on the lightning spell, and the vines surged forwards.

Light flashed, and the vines struck a shield of solid iridescence, skating off harmlessly. "Very good!" the other looper said. "Distraction and diversion! Much better!"

"Not good enough though," Flora said.

"No, but is that really a surprise? I've been doing this for a lot longer than you have," Twilight Sparkle said. "Let's take a break and go over what you can improve."

"Apple cider?" Twilight offered.

"Sure, thanks," Flora said, taking the offered glass.

"You did pretty well, especially for such a young looper," Twilight said. "But, you have the same problem I see in a lot of young looping magic users. You're now the most powerful thing in your own loop, and you've become used to that power doing all the work for you. There's nothing that forces you to work for your victories, to think creatively about your powers, and therefore you don't bother. Am I right?"

"...Yes, I guess you are," Flora said. "Even against the most powerful enemies from my baseline, I don't really have to push myself at all. The last time I went all out... Well, I kind of broke... Obsidian."

"The volcanic glass?" Twilight asked.

"No, the sub-universe," Flora said. "It's supposed to break, but I'm not supposed to be the one to do it, and I'm not really supposed to be able to do it."

"Ah, that makes more sense," Twilight said. "However, that just proves my point. Your own power is getting in the way of your ability to learn."

"What should I do?" Flora asked.

"Well, the first step is to broaden your selection of spells," Twilight said. "You have a lot of spells that all do the same thing. It's better to have a lot of spells that do different things."

"Twilight, that's not how my magic works," Flora said. "I'm the fairy of Nature. All my spells come from that."

"And I'm telling you you're wrong," Twilight said. "I've been practicing magic for a long time. I know how it works. You can cast spells that don't connect to plants."

"How?" Flora asked. "Aside from basics, like teleportation, telekinesis, and some other utility magics, I've never done anything that didn't involve nature in some way."

"I said spells that don't connect to plants," Twilight said. "I did not say spells that don't connect to nature."

"I'm not understanding the difference," Flora said.

"And that is where your problem is," Twilight said. "Your powers are kind of like our Cutie Marks. They represent what you are good at, and for magic users, what kind of magic you can most easily wield. However, your problem is that you are tapping into only the uppermost and most obvious interpretation of your powers. Plants are a part of nature, but what else can you use?"

"Wind?" Flora offered.

"A good start," Twilight said. "Keep going. What else is part of nature that isn't covered by plants?"

"...Rivers?" Flora offered.

"Water, very good," Twilight said. "What else?"

"Fire?" Flora asked, curious.

"Yes!" Twilight said. "Fire is as much a part of the natural order as plants are. Keep going!"

Flora thought for a moment. "Light?" she said tentatively.

"Yes!" Twilight said. "What else can you think of that your powers can do?"

Flora considered for a few moments before answering. "Anything," she said, stunned. "If you look at it the right way, everything comes from nature. Everything *is* nature."

"And therefore?"

"I can use my magic to create it!" Flora said.

"Exactly," Twilight said. "By believing in that connection, by making it real in your mind, you make it real in your magic as well. Now, show me some fire!"

"I'll... I'll try," Flora said. She closed her eyes. Fire. Her own antithesis. Or at least, she'd thought it was. But was it really? Fire was just another form of energy. Part of the natural cycle. She tried to establish the connection, but it sputtered and died the moment she tried to feed magic through it.

"For your first time, it may help if you find a particularly vivid mental image linking the two," Twilight said. "Understand that what you think of as isolated concepts are actually connected."

"A forest fire," Flora muttered. As terrible as such fires were, they were important. A necessary event for the health of the forest. The image swelled in her mind, linking her previous concept of nature with fire. Magic flowed through the connection. Flora opened her eyes to find a ball of greenish flame hovering over her hand. "I did it!" Flora said.

"Yes you did," Twilight said. "Remember, you can do this for anything, not just fire. Form the connection in your mind, then use that connection to make the magic take the form you want."

"That's amazing," Flora said.

"It is," Twilight said with a smile. "It's not perfect though. Spells you cast like that will be weaker and harder to manipulate than spells drawn from something you simply believe to be a part of your powers without having to think about it. So, while you can cast fire, until you manage to internalize that it is a part of nature rather than having to think about it, any fire spell you cast won't have the same power as your plant-based spells. Even then, it's likely they'll never be quite as strong, given how much practice you've had with your plant magic."

"But I will be able to use them," Flora said, idly moving her hand about. The green orb danced and flickered as it followed her movements.

"Yes," Twilight said. "And that gives you an edge in a magical duel. You can counter your opponents' spells with technique instead of force. Use the right spell, not the strongest spell."

"I understand," Flora said, dismissing the ball of fire. "Thank you for teaching me, Twilight. I thought I had mastered magic. Now I see I still have a lot to learn."

"Don't we all?" Twilight said. "Don't worry, we have all the time in the multiverse to learn."

17.2 (Awesomedude17)

"Focus. Let the sun empower you and lead your soul through kombat." Kotal Kahn said to Stella, who was barely getting by this loop.

"I really... Don't like fighting for Outworld."

"Indeed, we may have differences in our philosophy of protecting our home and realm of origin, but as this realm is, kombat is the only way to go forward, or face death."

"But do you have to work me to death?" Stella wiped off the sweat from her forehead.

"In a fight, comfort is a secondary consideration to survival. Even the least experienced warrior knows that staying alive and being sore is preferable to being dead. "Once more, attempt to strike me, without the overt use of magic."

Stella panted and gulped.

Why'd I think that training with this guy was a good idea? I thought he'd tell me everything about his Solar Magic, not Kung Fu me to half death!

And I'm sooooo sweaty!

17.3 (lord Martiya)

Musa and Darcy were on an outing. Knowing them Aisha didn't find it strange, even if she was stalking them to make sure the witch didn't do anything funny. What was strange was that she had just bumbled into Icy and Stormy doing the same. With a camera.

"What are you doing here?" she asked them.

"Preparing to stick it to the jerk." Stormy replied.

"What jerk?"

"Look, Riven is a jerk and there's a good reason Darcy spent hours torturing him psychologically when he was our prisoner, so we're here to see if our sister and Musa get together... And document it for Riven's benefit, if he ever starts Looping." Icy said. "And as they just happen to have been his girlfriends..."

Aisha couldn't say if she wanted to smack the two witches over their heads or help them. After all, Riven WAS a jerk and a horrible boyfriend...

17.4 (lord Martiya)

Taking advantage of a Loop where Musa was not Awake, Aisha had decided to ask Darcy about what had happened back when she had been with Riven. After all, as much as he was a horrible boyfriend he did have some redeeming features, and the two crazier Trix weren't exactly the best judges of character around.

So she had gone to Cloudtower… And then had to reach the Trix at the Wild Lands, of all places. And she had asked in presence of the other two.

"Aisha, you shouldn't listen my sisters about relationships. Unless it involves siblings." Darcy said.

"Then why all those fights?" Stormy asked.

"We both have a temper and we were at the first relationship, what did you expect? Aside for that one the day before we were expelled, that was because I told him who really caused the wind rider accident. We didn't see again until after we got the Dragon's Flame…"

Aisha couldn't help but slap her forehead. She should have expected that… But Icy did not relent.

"And what about those times you went out with him and returned hurt and tired?" she asked.

"A good idea of his. You're about to find out, and you'll thank him for that." Darcy replied.

"But-"

That was when Timmy (who was Awake this Loop) and Riven showed up with a hovertruck. And Timmy's grin was scarily wide. Then Riven spoke.

"Listen up, witches. I've been told me that you have tried the Black Mud Swamp training exercise and took eight hours and twelve minutes to come out, and Darcy has asked us to correct it! Now, when we'll be finished with you two that swamp shall be a leisure trip. Are you ready?"

"Does it matter?" Darcy asked.

"No, it doesn't."

"To prevent cheating." Timmy said as he slapped all the Trix with a magic-suppressing bracelet, eager to finally get back at the two for everything they and their sister had put him through (if nothing else, Darcy had apologized for that).

Surprisingly, Aisha managed to get some distance with her own wind rider before she started laughing at Icy and Stormy's faces. She wouldn't take those pictures, anyway.

"Soon, fairy! Soon I'll have surpassed you!" Icy said to Flora after surviving the survival course. The first of many, as neither Timmy nor Riven where nowhere near finished. "Those two Specialists' survival course will bring me well above your level!"

After noting that it explained why Icy and Stormy were having trouble standing, had rather twitchy eyes, ripped clothes (but no exposed wound) and a bad smell while Darcy looked like she just had a good workout, Flora had to answer her: "Actually, Aisha forced us through their survival course after we destroyed the Ancestral Witches. Said we couldn't afford a repeat of the beating your sisters and you gave us while we were powerless. Then-"

Icy's scream of rage was heard in all the three schools. And Flora hadn't even got around telling her of the boot camps she had gone through after she had started Looping...

17.5 (lord Martiya)

"Specialists in getting into trouble!" Timmy shouted as he ran.

He had been out in the woods for a walk, alone and with minimal weapons and tools, and somehow he had just stumbled into Valtor, of all people. And while not a Looper, he was still incredibly powerful and skilled at magic. And he wanted to know how to infiltrate Red Tower. Hence why he was trying to run after the warlock had fried his communicator.

"Run, little boy, run!" Valtor mocked him, going for the psychological manipulation as usual. "I'm sure the ladies will appreciate it!"

That was the absolutely worst thing to say to Timmy. He wasn't over Tecna, and likely wouldn't be for a while. Worse still, in his baseline he had once refused to fight a battle with the Trix because he knew he'd have died without even slowing them down, and Tecna had despised him until she had seen him cutting loose in a battle that they could (and did) win. Calling Timmy a coward or alluding to his luck with the fairer gender were such faux paxes that even Icy wasn't insensible enough to do them... And Valtor had done both in quick succession.

"At that point he realized what was happening and stopped to teleport away, but he did it in range of the trap with the hunting troll, and you can guess what happened next." Timmy said, finishing his report on the fight with Valtor.

"Please, kill me." Valtor begged from where he was lying with many broken bones, also being tortured by the side effect of the skunk trap and the giant hornets nest.

"A good job Timmy, especially as you were improvising." Saladin said. "Just one question, what did he say for you to do that to him?"

17.6

Flora stared at the boy who had replaced Saladin's nephew this loop. The black hair, the glasses, the scar, there was no mistaking who this was. She was staring at one of the most powerful beings in Yggdrasil, one whose name was spoken with awe and reverence. A name to conjure by. A name that could inspire hope in even the most beaten down, and strike fear into the mighty.

She had no idea how to react, so she said the first thing that came into her mind. "Mister Potter," Flora said. "Our new celebrity." In hindsight, this may have been a mistake.

Harry James Potter stared at the fairy in utter disbelief for a moment. Then he burst out laughing. He collapsed to the ground howling, no, *roaring* , with laughter as Flora looked on, mortified.

A full ten minutes later, he finally had himself under control again, though the hiccups and gasps made that somewhat questionable. "That... that was a good one," Harry said, raising his hand weakly. "Your impression's a bit off, but still, that was good. Damn, I haven't laughed like that in *ages* . I like you."

"Thank you," Flora said. "Uh, I'm Flora, this loop's Anchor."

"Harry Potter, but you already knew that," Harry said, wiping a tear of mirth from his eye. "You're a brave one. Most loopers don't have it in them to make jokes about us O7."

"Thank you," Flora repeated.

"So, what do you do around here?" Harry asked. "It's certainly a very pretty loop."

"Thank you," Flora said for the third time. "And mostly... we save the Magic Dimension from being taken over by evil."

"Sounds like fun," Harry said. "When do we start?"

17.7

"So, how's your magic training been going?" Aisha asked as she and Flora strolled through Magix. "You said something about being able to use other elements now, right?"

"That's rightt," Flora said. "I decided that I'd use some of my solo loops to practice by telling people I was a fairy of the element I wanted to practice. So far I've done wind, fire, ice, and water loops, though I've been working on other elements too."

"What's that like?" Aisha asked.

"Hard," Flora said. "It's still easier than some of my early baseline runs were, but it's a challenge. I have to push myself for every spell I cast, and even then, it's nowhere near as strong as my usual magic."

"Anything you can show me?" Aisha asked.

"Sure," Flora said. "When's a good time for you?"

"There you are, you little pixies!" Icy said as she and her sisters appeared in a flash of light.

"Is it wrong that I like them more when they're not Awake?" Flora muttered.

"They're certainly more predictable like this," Aisha said. "Does now work for you?"

"Sure, sit back and watch the show," Flora said with a grin, her wings flashing into existence behind her as Aisha stepped to the side.

"Ice Spiral!" Icy shouted, shards of ice rushing towards the Anchor.

"Flaming Blossom," Flora said, raising her hand. A lotus of flame billowed out, vaporizing the ice shards. "Storm Chain," she added. Lightning lanced down from the sky to her hand, then rushed forward to blow Icy off her feet.

"Shadow Ray!" Darcy said, firing a beam of darkness at Flora.

"Psycho Twister!" Stormy shouted, adding a tornado crackling with lightning to her sister's attack.

"Cloud Break," Flora announced. A beam of light stabbed down from above. Darcy's beam evaporated in the light as the tornado came apart under Flora's influence. "Frost Shock," Flora said, throwing out a spray of icy vapor at Stormy.

"Icicle Blast!" Icy shouted, announcing her return to the fight by overriding Flora's spell with her own. "You call that an ice spell? That was pathetic!"

"Gust Sphere," Flora said, a ball of air forming around her to blow Icy's attack away. "Ice Petals," Flora said. A cloud of ice shards shaped like rose petals formed around the fairy. A quick gesture sent them flying at the Trix, scooping them up and hurling them to the ground.

"Stone Grip," Flora said, and the ground itself reached up to grab the downed witches, holding them down.

The trio struggled for a moment, then glared at Flora. "You'll pay for this, pixie," Icy said. The three witches vanished with the same flash that marked their arrival.

"Nice," Aisha said, pushing off from the wall she'd been leaning against. "I see what you mean though. It looked like you were really working for some of those spells."

"Yes," Flora said, transitioning back to her civilian form. "It's hard to rapidly switch elements. I've been practicing, but you saw how bad my first ice spell was. I switched to wind because I was using that as far back as baseline."

"Makes sense," Aisha said. "You're comfortable with it and you don't have to work as hard."

"Exactly," Flora said. "I'll get better with time, I just need practice."

"Well, time's one thing we don't lack," Aisha said.

"Indeed," a new voice said, as it's owner stepped out from between two buildings.

Flora moved with the speed of her vampiric side, pushing Aisha behind her as she faced down the speaker. Her wings reappeared with a flash and a nearly blinding corona of power rapidly formed around her. "Dio Brando," she said. "I thought I told you my loop was off limits. Get out before I destroy you."

"Calm yourself, child," Dio said.

"No," Flora said. "You don't get to call me that. Not after everything you've done, everything you tried to do. My name is Flora Victoria. Now get out of my sight."

"Flora, what's going on?" Aisha asked.

"Your Anchor is holding a grudge," Dio said smoothly.

"You killed three of my looping friends, many of my non-looping friends, almost killed me, and then tried to destroy my universe!" Flora said. "Not content with that, you tried to kill me again! I'd say my behavior is justified!"

"Perhaps," Dio said. "However, I was laboring under a misconception brought about by incomplete information. This lack has been... rectified. I now see my mistakes for what they were, and would seek peace with you. What say you?"

"No," Flora said. "You say you've had a change of heart, but I don't trust you as far as Pif can throw you. Get out of my sight before I make good on the promise I made the last time we spoke."

"You are passing up a chance for peace," Dio said. "Are you certain this is what you wish to do?"

"Yes," Flora said fiercely. "I'm done talking with you. Get out of my sight before I eject you from my loop."

"Very well then," Dio said. "If you wish to foolishly throw away my offer, then I will withdraw. But I promise you, one day you will look back on this moment, and you will wish you had taken my offer."

"Get out," Flora spat, flinging a surge of magic that hurled Dio across the street. He rose, dusted himself off, then vanished back into one of Magix's alleys.

"Was that really necessary?" Aisha asked. "He said he'd changed..."

"I heard him," Flora said. She transition back to her civilian form once more, then let out a sigh. "It would be nice if it was true, but I've had too many bad experiences with him to ever trust him. And he never said he changed, just that he'd learned more about the loops. He didn't want peace. He just wanted me off his back."

"You're sure about that?" Aisha said. "You said Kyubey was changing."

"Kyubey's different," Flora said. "He lacked the ability to understand the morality of his actions. He can learn. He is learning. Dio knew exactly why his actions were wrong. And he did them anyways. Maybe he can change, but it'll take a lot of proof before I trust him to run around my loop freely."

"Alright," Aisha said. "You're the Anchor."

"Yes I am," Flora said heavily. "This is my loop, more than anyone else's. It's my responsibility to keep it safe."

"And you're doing a good job of it," Aisha said with a smile. "Let's head back to Alfea. I think we've had enough adventure for one day."

17.8 (Awesomedude17)

The entirety of The Winx Club were Awake this loops, and Summer Vacation started. Being the one who gets to choose this time, Flora said that they will go camping on Earth. They settled on camping in some forest on Earth, away from prying eyes.

"Wow... this place is pretty." Aisha smiled.

"I know." Stella agreed.

"Well, you know how pure nature can be." Flora said as she finished setting up the last tent.

"So, has anything new come up while we weren't Awake?" Musa asked.

"Not that I know of. I did notice Riven acting a little off, but it never happened again, so it was probably a variant."

"Hey girls, do you hear that?" Techna looked around.

"You know what, I do." Bloom looked around.

A rumbling sound was getting progressively louder.

A rumbling sound Flora recognized.

"Excuse me girls... I think I have some business to take care of." Flora got up and transformed, flying up into he air to find the source. She used her vampire senses to track the source down.

She quickly flew towards it.

Damned ship! Why must it degrade so often? The being thought to himself as he checked what was wrong now. One of these days he was going to get a new ship, probably with a bigger trophy room. He soon found the source of the problem, an opening from the hull of the ship. He'd have to go outside. He armed himself in his usual gear in case a local predator tried anything funny. As the ship's hatch opened, he began to notice a figure.

Wait, I know her!

Flora scowled as she grabbed the alien and threw him into a tree.

"I knew I'd have to deal with your kind again someday! Well you're not killing my friends again."

The being got up and fled. Why must his former hunts come back to haunt him in the most inopportune times?

Regardless, the usual vine traps came along. Using his wrist claws, he cut them down as easily as before. He quickly stopped, looking around. He then noticed Flora walking slowly at him.

He wasn't in the mood, so he decided to end this before it got ugly, again.

"Stop, now!"

"You can talk?

" ***Not exactly.*** *If you would be so kind as to let me explain,* I will. "

Flora looked sceptical.

"Or really, after everything your kind has done to my friends?"

"Youth is wasted on the stupid, ***as it is said."***

"Wait, why are you here?"

"Ship malfunction. *I was about to fix it, before* ***you came along.*** "

Flora glared at him, right before she noticed Techna appearing from the bushes. Flora quickly got in between her and the being.

"Flora, who's that?" Techna asked, getting ready for a fight.

"I think you'd remember that, looper."

At that point, Flora connected the dots.

"You're the one who killed my friends?"

" *You ate my face.* "

"Am I missing something?" Techna asked, unsure what was going on.

"Yes, because you weren't even Awake yet."

" **Enough of this.** *I think explanations are in order.* "

Flora and the rest of her looping friends watched on as the being fixed the crack in the hull with a specialized welding tool.

"So, you were in your early looping days when you came across Magix?" Musa asked.

" *Yes.* "

"And you were barely aware of the going ons of the loops?" Techna added.

" Indeed. "

"And how'd you find out about the loops?" Stella asked.

" ***Naoki Kashima.*** "

"Oh great, him." Flora rubbed her temples.

The being turned his head towards Flora, as if he was glaring at her. Flora ignored him as she looked back, unpocketing her gun.

" **An M-96 Mattock.** " The being noticed.

"How do you... Do you know a Commander Shepard?"

" Worked under him. *Vakarian was more* **interesting though.** " The being began to finish welding the ship's breach close.

Flora shook her head and demanded, "Look, what are you planning?"

" **Pest control.** Xenomorph infection ***at Nevada.*** *I figured that humans weren't expected to live,* **thus a perfect hunt for** hard *meat.* " The being inspected the results of the fix and concluded that it'll last after slamming it with his fist several times.

"Hold on, at least tell us your name?" Stella asked.

The being growled in his tongue, and then said.

" ***Scarface.*** " Scarface soon got back into his ship and prepared to fly off. The Winx flew off back to the camp they set up.

"Flora, how do you know a Yautja?" Bloom asked.

Flora sighed. "It's a long story. I only told it to Twilight Sparkle because... well... It's not a happy tale."

"It can't be completely bad, right?" Techna asked.

"Well, maybe I should start telling you the basics when we get back to camp."

The group flew off, unaware of what truly happened in Magix near the beginning of their world's loop history.

Author's Notes:

17.1: Even in the Loops, there's always more to learn.

17.2: You *do* know what Kung Fu translates as, right Stella?

17.3: Seen from outside, Musa and Riven's relationship is very hard to understand.

17.4: More Trix survival training! Good luck Icy! You'll need it.

17.5: Respect the Nerd!

17.6: The usual commentary for this loop has been removed out of respect for recent events. Rest in peace, Alan Rickman.

17.7: Flora's not the only one learning...

17.8: Okay, so Awesomedude17 went and did a thing (again). This is just the setup. Next chapter is the payoff, so be sure to take the time to look at it.

A Predator In Magix

(Awesomedude17)

It was a dark, silent night in Magix. Timmy and Riven were looking out from the room they were in, then shook their heads.

Recently, a strange earthquake had erupted near Magix, which was very unusual in and of itself.

But then came the news that someone had been killed, and they were missing their spine and skull.

At first, Riven brushed it off; after all, who'd be stupid enough to take on a fairy, or a witch, or even a specialist like himself? He had nothing to worry about.

But then came more news of the exact same thing, with some reports mixed in of victims being flayed (thankfully, it seemed, after they'd been killed) and then hung up, almost as if it were a warning.

At that point, the people who kept up with the news found out that there was a connection. Whoever had their spines ripped out always were strong users of magic, or at the least, put up one hell of a fight, and occasionally, there were talks about a fluorescent green liquid at the scene.

Whatever the truth might be, there was no doubt about one thing.

There was a serial killer, and the pattern was worrying. After all, the killer seemed to be moving towards Red Fountain.

Riven may have been, as some would put it, a jackass, but he wasn't completely heartless. He knew that lives were at risk.

"Timmy..."

"Yes, Riven?"

"I'm going to tell the headmaster to evacuate the school right now." Riven began to walk off.

"What? Why?"

"Because it's only a matter of time before this serial killer comes to Red Fountain, and then what? A bunch of inexperienced students are going to die." The two went outside. Timmy thought about what Riven said and nodded.

"You're right. Let's go!"

Riven nodded, then noticed something.

"Timmy, what's that?"

Timmy looked up and saw a shadowy figure. It took out a staff and jumped down. The two took out whatever weapons they had and prepared themselves.

But Timmy was too slow and was stabbed through the chest.

"Timmy!"

The being took the staff out from the dead specialist's chest and looked at Riven. The figure soon found himself being sucker punched and tossed into a wall. Riven cracked his knuckles and walked towards the being, taking out his flail.

"You're not getting away!"

The figure snarled as it unsheathed its arm blades and swung at Riven, who dodged swiftly and swung his mace, knocking off its helmet. That particular hit also made it bleed...

Bleed fluorescent green blood.

Riven threw another punch, but it was intercepted by the figure, who twisted the arm in a way that disabled it. Riven cried out in pain, and soon felt a scaly hand on his neck. He opened his eyes and saw the figure's face.

Riven grimaced at the sight of it.

"You are one... ugly..."

The figure snarled as it decided not to play around anymore.

"Motherf-

SQUELCH

Flora groaned. Her first Hellsing Loop had only ended a few dozen Loops ago, but she still was a true vampire. The migraines she had trying to suppress her vampire side were starting to take a toll on her. If only Shepard were here. They'd have her use a gun, but at least they'd be willing to listen to her complaints and offer solutions.

Add onto that the fact that no one from her Branch was 'Activated' yet and that proved to be the perfect combination to bring in an undue amount of stress.

And that wasn't getting into her friend's problems. Musa once again had started dating Riven, and she knew that while he was not completely bad, he was still a jerk. And then there were the Trix, whom she'd forgotten to make sure they didn't pull any funny business this time (though to be fair to herself, she'd only thought up of scaring them into submission recently, and doing so hadn't been burned into her mind yet.) They were guaranteed to try and steal the Dragon's Flame again. To wrap things up with a pretty gaudy bow, there was the unusual theme of this Loop, namely the serial killings in Magix. It was enough to convince her that this Loop was going to suck hard.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

"MUSA!" Flora jumped out of her seat and quickly join the rest of the Winx to where they heard Musa.

When they reached her, they knew two things.

One was that Musa was alright.

Two was that there were two corpses, one skinned and hanging by the feet, and the other headless.

Stella quickly lost her lunch.

Faragonda shook her head sadly as she looked over the two bodies and looked at Musa.

"So you found them like this?"

"Y-y-y-yes." Musa stammered, fighting back tears and failing.

Flora could only stare as her friends were in a state of panic. Poor Riven. He may have been a jerk, but even he didn't deserve to be killed, especially like this.

And then there was Timmy. Poor Techna; she was sure that the two would've been happy.

Flora looked over to Bloom, who was the only one not completely shellshocked.

"Who could've done such a horrible thing?"

"I don't know, but I'll just say it, Musa really isn't in a good mood."

Flora looked at Musa, who seemed seconds away from sucking her own thumb. "I'd say that's an understatement."

"Regardless of whether it's an understatement or not, there's one thing that I'm certain of. This thing isn't getting away with this. They killed Timmy and Riven and they'll kill more people too," Techna said.

"Techna, hold on. We don't know who or what's doing all this. For all we know, it could be a god-like being who really likes skulls... A... Lot." Flora trailed off.

Techna and Bloom could only stare.

"Look, just this morning, we found the dead bodies of Riven and Timmy, what did you expect of me?!"

"...Quite," Techna replied, blinking.

"Girls," Miss Faragonda said, "we're going to let the local authorities handle this. Right now, we're going to go back to Alfea and lock down the school."

"Can't we go back home? I mean, if this thing is killing magic users and specialists..." Bloom stammered.

"I'll consider it, but only if there's a reasonable risk for there to be casualties amongst the students. Let's go back."

Flora sighed. This Loop was already shaping up to be the worst.

The Winx were gathered in the main place for them to hang out. They looked at each other and felt dread.

"Riven didn't deserve to die... he didn't..." Musa sobbed.

"Calm down, Musa. It'll be alright." Stella almost felt another surge of nausea, but fought it back.

"No!"

Bloom walked up to Musa and placed her hand on her shoulder.

"No worries, Musa. We'll get back at this guy, I promise."

Flora shook her head.

"Bloom, this thing killed really powerful witches and fairies too. We're barely midway through our studies. Do you think we will even stand a chance against him?"

"...Not if we do it alone."

"Alone?"

"I may not like it, but I know some people who can help us for sure."

The Winx had managed to sneak out of Alfea and were waiting at a café.

"Bloom, may I ask who we're waiting for?" Flora asked.

"They'll be here in a second. When they responded, they insisted on this place."

"Who?"

"Us."

The six turned and saw the Trix, who were clearly displeased at the group.

"Icy? Stormy? Darcy?" Flora exclaimed.

"That's us." Darcy said. "Let's get right down to it. Riven was killed this morning?"

"Yes, Musa found him and Timmy." Stella explained, looking at a shellshocked Musa.

"Huh... I actually feel sorry for you. You did steal him from me."

"Shut up!" Musa spat back, getting up from her seat.

"Woah there, we're not against you... right now, at least." Stormy waved her hands in front of her.

Musa glared at the three, right before she sat back down.

"Now, as you might know-"

"This thing had killed witches and fairies alike, and some of those witches we kinda liked."

"So we've decided that while we hate you, we hate that thing more."

"So we're helping."

Oh, how he loved to stalk his prey before striking.

"Fine, then. We'll let you join us." the cyborg replied.

He wondered if the cyborg had a skull that was natural. Perhaps.

"Glad you girls are seeing reason. We'll find this monster, and we'll make him suffer... A LOT!"

Hmm, it seemed they were after him now. Out of all the potential threats, he had to have come across the ones that are barely old enough to be considered prey.

He had noticed that one of them was displaying curious behavior. If she was the Anchor, she'd be someone he'd have to avoid killing, lest he end up back in that damned Branch some of the others called Eiken.

The Yautja stood up and jumped to another rooftop. Sunset was coming. He'd have the veil of night to aid his hunt.

Scarface was going to enjoy this.

Nighttime fell and the group ultimately decided to stay close, reasoning that one killer couldn't take eight people at once.

To their credit, they were right. For the past hour, Scarface couldn't find the perfect opportunity to even injure one of these humans, let alone kill them.

So he continued to follow, waiting for an opening.

Then came the opening.

The one they called Stormy tripped on a small pile of garbage. He decided that now was the opportunity. He quickly dropped down.

"Hey, wait u-mmm!"

Scarface threw her into an alleyway and took out his Combi-staff, chirping with glee.

"UGH! What was that for?" Stormy then saw the staff, the same one that was talked about in the news, and smirked. "Oh, you want to try and kill me, do you?"

Scarface wanted to humor her, but he knew that even a Nonlooper could be dangerous, as he'd learned many times after he gotten used to appearing in other worlds, so threw the staff. Stormy rolled out of the way and conjured lighting. Scarface promptly ducked out of the way and charged at her, intent on taking his prize.

"You're lucky that you got a chance with me!" Stormy taunted.

"I think she was here!" a semi-distant Icy yelled.

Scarface jumped onto the rooftops, not wanting to be caught yet.

"Yeah, you better run!"

"Stormy, what happened?" Icy asked, coming into the alley with Darcy.

"That ugly killer tried to get me, but I scared him off."

"Really, now?" Darcy asked, sceptical.

"Of course I did... What's that?"

Icy looked down to see three red dots on her chest.

A strange noise rang out, and shortly after, a wet sound rang out as a bolt of plasma hit her square in her center of mass. The two other witches quickly averted their gazes, and then looked back.

At that, they yelped. Icy was falling down, a smoking hole in her chest.

"ICY!" Darcy yelled out. Stormy looked around, unaware that Scarface had activated his cloak. Sneaking up to the two, he de-cloaked and stabbed Darcy in the neck with his wrist-blades. He turned to Stormy, who was too dumbfounded to do anything.

"You're lucky that you got a chance with me!" Scarface taunted with his recording program, pacing forward.

"Wait, stay back!"

"Come on Stormy, we can get that monster guy easy, right?" He taunted again with Icy's voice.

"Get back!" Stormy launched a powerful stream of water, which Scarface merely ignored.

"This will be easy. Way too easy." Scarface grabbed Stormy's neck, and let out a disturbing laugh. Tears formed in Stormy's eyes as she shook her head, unable to accept her fate.

At first, it seemed to be working, until...

"NO NO NAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!"

"Dammit Stormy." Flora muttered under her breath. The group ran as fast as they could as storm clouds began to form above the city. The group didn't take long to find the handiwork of the killer.

"No!, We're too late!" Bloom yelled out.

"OH, I think I'm gonna be sick..." Stella dry heaved.

"Great, first them! If that thing gets to us, we're as good as dead if he took out the Trix."

"Wait, girls, look at Icy." Techna kneeled down to inspect her wound. "It's nothing like anything I've ever heard from the reports."

"Yeah, look at it. It's kinda... burnt." Stella noted, barely fighting back nausea.

"And obviously that guy didn't have enough time to clean up, or do their usual thing." Flora deduced. "With one exception."

"Stormy is missing her head... and possibly her spine." Musa said, tone neutral.

"Girls, maybe going after this thing was a bad idea. Maybe we should cut our losses and get back to Alfea before Faragonda finds out about us." Bloom said.

"No, we're going after that thing!" Musa snapped back.

"Musa, are you out of your mind?!"

"She just lost her boyfriend, who died in the most violent way possible." Flora said. "But that's no excuse to go after something that clearly killed three of the most powerful witches in all of Magix."

"You don't know anything, Flora! If you girls won't help me, I'll do it myself!" Musa began to stomp off.

"Musa, don't do that!" Bloom quickly ran after her.

"Great! We're dealing with a head stealer alone. We're going to die!" Stella began to hyperventilate.

"Stella, calm down. We'll get through this, I promise." Techna stated, with Flora agreeing quickly.

"S-Still..."

"Relax Stella, we won't let that thing kill you if it's the last thing we do." Techna assured the quivering mess.

Stella sniffed. "Thanks, girls. You're the best!" She smiled softly.

"Right, but we're going to have to help Musa, before that thing gets to her."

"And Bloom. We can't let her die. We can't let any of us die." Flora began to chase down the two runaways, with the other two following.

Meanwhile, Scarface watched on from the rooftops.

This Bloom is spoken of with high importance. She has to be the one that if I kill, it will send me to Eiken. I must avoid killing her.

Her friend, on the other hand...

Bloom caught up with Musa just as it had begun raining.

"Musa, please stop! You're going to get yourself killed!"

Musa quickly turned around. "No way, Bloom. I'm not going to let that thing get away for killing Riven."

"But Riven was..." Bloom sighed. "Look, there's no way we're letting that guy get away, but you need to think. The last thing we need is you losing your spine, or being skinned and hanged by the ankles."

"But... But..." Musa stammered.

"Musa!"

"... You're right Bloom. I'm being a huge idiot. Let's get back to the... BLOOM, BEHIND YOU!"

Bloom turned around and was met with a sucker punch. Knocked out, the being turned to Musa and chirped. He took out a staff and expanded it.

Musa then recognized what it was.

"That staff - it was seen by witnesses. You're the killer! It was you! YOU KILLED RIVEN!" Musa used a sound blast and pushed Scarface back slightly. Annoyed at this one, he walked forward.

Musa upped her blasts, knocking the hunter back more and more until he noticed that she was strong.

Strong prey. He jumped and threw his staff. Musa dodged it, and looked around for the killer.

Curse this rain, it's ruining my cloak, Scarface thought to himself as he snuck up on Musa, uncloaked.

Musa then turned around and was face to face with Scarface. Her scowl soon turned into a look of agony as she stared down at her stomach. He had stabbed her through the gut. He slowly drove the blades upwards, making Musa scream in agony.

Deciding enough was enough, he quickly drove his arm through the wound and stabbed the heart. Musa quickly gave gasping breaths as her eyes fluttered closed. Scarface withdrew his arm and let Musa fall down. He turned to the unconscious Bloom and chuckled a little.

He would tie her up at his ship, then leave her somewhere else while he flew off. That's what he usually did to other Anchors who didn't put up a fight.

But before that...

SQUELCH

Scarface grabbed Bloom by her leg and dragged her off. After all, his ship wasn't too far off.

By the time he left, the rest of the Winx came to the scene. They looked at the body on the ground and gasped.

"NO NO! The killer got Musa!" Stella yelled.

"We're too late." Flora felt a pit in her stomach. Her friends were in danger before, but none had actually been killed before. This was a major feeling she didn't want to feel.

'Come on, Police Girl...'

Flora moaned.

"Whoever this being is, it's obviously not far off. Perhaps if we split up-"

"No. The Trix were killed because Stormy fell behind. Musa and possibly Bloom died because they ran away from us. We need to stick together, right now. We lost because we separated! No more splitting up, period!"

Techna looked at Flora, then Stella. She took a deep breath and said, "You're right. I'm not thinking clearly. I'm having some strange feelings I haven't had before... I think it's despair."

Flora walked up to Techna and put a hand on her shoulder.

"Relax, Techna, we'll get that guy. I promise that he'll not last long when we finally face him down, together!"

Techna sighed and nodded.

"Right! Let's go!"

The group quickly went searching, trying to find the killer.

Bloom awoke up and looked around. A blast of steam barely missed her face, but she could feel the moisture and heat emanating from it. She then looked at her captor as he placed several skulls on podiums. He took one last look, then turned to Bloom. She then noticed all the bonds on her. Wrapped hands, tied legs, a taped-shut mouth. He clearly didn't want her using magic. She noticed who her assailant was.

He was a reptilian-like humanoid, with nails sharpened like claws, and his weapons looked more futuristic than Techna could ever hope for.

But even worse was his face. Instead of a typical hinged jaw, it had a line of sharp teeth, with the four mandibles surrounding it moving independently. His eyes were yellow in color, and it was altogether hideous.

He put his helmet on and began to walk out. It was then that Bloom realized that her captor, and more likely, the killer wasn't magical in the slightest. He was not even human, fairy or witch. He was an alien predator, on the hunt in Magix.

And he had her captive for whatever reason.

All Bloom could do was cry. She wasn't sure what he did, but he probably killed Musa, and would probably kill the others too.

She never felt so alone.

Flora, Techna and Stella looked around for the killer. They weren't sure who to look for, but they did know that it had dreadlocks.

Stella in particular was feverously looking around. That thing was going too far. She was no longer going to get sick; she was dealing with him once and for all.

Flora looked up, and noticed something off.

"What's that?" She pointed at the object.

It was a barely visible figure, and it was watching them. When it noticed that it was caught, it ran.

"Get him!" Stella yelled, chasing after the being, with Techna and Flora following not too far behind.

Scarface was enjoying this hunt so far. He had managed to capture the Anchor and tie her up in a way that she'd be stuck. Meanwhile, he was leading the rest to his trap.

Everything was falling into place. He walking into a building and calmly looked over everything.

Perfect.

Stella, Flora and Techna walked into a run-down building, having following the thing into it.

"He couldn't have gone far," Techna noted.

Stella nodded and began pacing.

"He probably didn't. We'll need to..."

SNAP

"AHHH!"

"Stella!" Flora ran towards the hole, when a net holding her flew up, held up by some kind of technology.

"Flora, Techna, help!"

The net began to tighten.

"Ow ow... OH OWWW AHHHHHHHHH!"

The net cut through her body, stopping at the bone. Techna and Flora were too dumbfounded to do anything.

"S-STELLA!" Techna yelled out.

"No no NO! DAMMIT!" Flora punched at the wall.

"Flora!"

"What!?" Flora's eyes briefly glew red.

"..." Techna could only stare.

"What!?"

"...P-Please Flora, calm down."

"Calm down? Musa's dead. Stella died before our eyes! BLOOM MIGHT BE DEAD TOO! HOW CAN I FUCKING CALM DOWN!?"

Techna opened her mouth, then closed it, and repeated it, unable to form words.

Flora heaved, looking over her friend, and then took deep breaths.

"Stella... I'm sorry. I'm just... this is nothing anyone should have to go through. I'm just..." Flora held her friend's hands. "Look, I really just want to say, I'm sorry. I'm overreacting."

"No no! I understand. I'm just not really sure how... I mean... All I can say is that whoever did this is nothing but a monster. Plain and simple. We'll get him, and we'll do it... together." Techna tightened her hold on Flora's hands.

"...Thank you, Techna." Flora noticed something, grabbed Techna, and dodged from a strike. It was then that they saw him.

Scarface himself growled quietly, right before expanding his wrist blades and heating them up.

Techna saw exactly what this creature was doing and turned to Flora.

"Run. Get out of her,e Flora! I'll hold him off."

"What! Techna, I can't!"

"Do it! We lost too many, we can't lose any more. GO!"

Flora's heart fell as she got up and ran off, leaving Techna alone with the Predator.

"Alright... Let me show you what I can do."

Scarface took a step forward, and then noticed his helmet malfunctioning.

Then his plasma caster, then his cloak, then his helmet.

Error messages blared as he felt blasts of something knock him back. Scarface realized that something was ruining his tech, so he had to ditch them. After removing the helmet, finally seeing clearly, he noticed that this prey had grown sharp, angular wings, and was dressed differently.

He got up and took out his combi-staff, and roared at Techna.

Techna, now in her Charmix form, walked forward.

"I'm stopping you, monster, one way or another."

A challenge. Shame this young woman wasn't a Looper. Her skull would be an amazing prize.

Scarface jumped into the air, with Techna flying after him.

The two soon clashed.

Flora ran as fast as she could. She wasn't sure where, but she was running. It only took her about half an hour, but she soon was stopped by something metal.

SMACK

"OW! UGH!" Flora looked at what had hit her.

Nothing.

Not sure what was happening, she reached out.

The ship's cloak was failing slightly thanks to the touch. Flora quickly looked for an entrance, and found it. Using magic, she opened the hatch, and flew inside.

Steam was blowing everywhere; the atmosphere was full of dreary oranges and yellows.

And Flora wasn't sure where she was. Slowing her exploring, she noticed something nearby. She walked into the room and gasped.

The room was lined with skulls of all kinds. Not just humans, not just fairies, but of beings that were not human at all. She was speechless. This thing's motivations were now clear. It was hunting out fairies and witches and humans for sport.

Flora felt something she never liked to feel.

Rage. Simmering, barely restrained rage.

That thing killed her friends, and for what reason? Because it wanted to hunt them... for sport.

Flora was barely controlling her vampiric side, when she noticed something out the side of her eye.

"Bloom?"

"MMP? MM-MMM!"

"Bloom!" Flora removed the binding from Bloom's mouth quickly.

"Ow!"

"Sorry Bloom. Oh, I'm so glad you're okay!" Flora hugged Bloom.

"I'm glad you are too. Where's Musa?"

"...Dead."

"Stella?"

"Dead."

"Techna?!"

"...I'm not sure..."

"You're... not sure?"

Flora gulped. "No."

"..." Bloom was silent.

"...Look, we need to get out of here right now before that monster gets back." Flora said as she released Bloom from her binds, then

quickly grabbed her by the arm and ran off. When she exited the room, they found a nasty surprise.

Scarface.

He wasn't too pleased to find that someone trespassed on his ship, and dropped the skulls he gathered on his hunt.

Flora counted how many.

Flora didn't want to believe it, but she now knew it.

He killed Techna.

"Bloom... leave," Flora said softly.

"Flora?!"

"LEAVE!" Flora's eyes glowed red once more.

Bloom yelped and ran away deeper into the ship.

Scarface expanded his wrist blades. One left.

Bloom found herself in the ship's cockpit. She wasn't sure what happened, but she was scared.

Hopefully Flora's alright.

At that moment, something was thrown through the entire ship, wall and hull and all. Bloom looked between the holes created and saw something fly through them.

"What the hell?"

Not too far off, Scarface smacked into a tree and fell down onto the ground. Shaking himself awake, he looked back at his ship, and saw

Flora land softly.

The human I caught wasn't the stabilizer of the world!? Impossible! Scarface quickly got up onto his feet. He may have misjudged some things, but he wasn't letting this Anchor kill him.

Flora floated near the Predator, as lightning revealed the look of pure rage on her face. She soon summoned vines from the ground, intent on capturing him. Scarface merely used his claws to cut them down as quickly as they came up. He charged at Flora, who created a wall of vegetation in between them. Scarface swiped at the wall, slicing it to nothing just as quickly as he had the vines. Flora then surprised him with some anti-materiel bullets from a massive rifle, hitting him in the stomach. Scarface roared in pain as he looked at the grievous injury. Snarling in pain, he charged right into the gunfire.

Flora found herself running out of ammo, so she pocketed the Harkonnen and tried to bring out another gun -

But soon felt a massive amount of pain in her gut. She looked down at her stabbed stomach, and then looked right into the eyes of the Predator.

His eyes, the eyes that belonged to the killer of her closest friends.

Her own eyes flashed brightly as she began to transform. Scarface wasn't sure what was happening, but it was worrying.

She grew shark-like teeth, her arms began to elongate and bulge, and an aura of dread and despair flowed around her.

And then she grabbed the arm that was stabbing her and ripped it out of Scarface's arm socket.

As he roared in intense agony, he heard... laughter?

Flora laughed as she took the arm attached to her, yanked it from her stomach, and held in front of her.

"You done goofed," she said, crushing the arm and spraying green blood over everything.

Scarface widened his eyes. This was completely different from what he was expecting.

He needed his gear. He ran back towards his ship, but was stopped when vines quickly wrapped around his ankles. He tried to use his wrist blade, but Flora, in a blink of an eye, rushed towards the trapped Predator and ripped the other arm off.

Scarface, now armless and unable to fight, roared in agony. He then felt something holding his face. He then looked into Flora's eyes, her sadistic smile, her inhuman looks.

"You know what..." Flora said as softly as possible. "All this running away, and then this fighting has really worked up an appetite. Why, I'm so hungry, I could eat an entire city." She licked her lips, and made sucking noises. "But since there isn't anyone nearby... I guess you'll have to do."

Scarface widened his eyes. Was she really going to do it?

"You know, with a face like yours, I do wonder something." Flora smiled viciously. "I wonder with a face like yours, if it tastes just like sweet... succulent... lobster."

Dear gods, she's serious!

"Guess I'll find out in a second." She opened her jaw to an unimaginable angle and reeled back. Scarface made panicked yells of fear and shook his head in a desperate attempt to throw her aim off.

She quickly drove in for the kill.

CRUNCH!

Munch *Munch* *Munch* *Munch* *Munch*

Flora swallowed the chewed up face and frowned.

"UGH, no it doesn't. Pity." Flora let the dead Yautja drop and looked towards the city, smiling viciously. Oh, how this felt great! Why didn't she give in earlier? Blood tasted so good, but she refused to fall into temptation, but... but...

A bright light appeared before her. She covered her eyes, and when the light dissipated, she looked back.

Shortly after, the fairy that appeared in front of her blasted magic into her face. She flew right back at the ship and landed with a resounding thud. The immense shock of the blast quickly faded her into unconsciousness.

"Don't worry Flora, I'll help you now that I am here."

Flora felt sore all over. She groaned as she tried to get out of bed.

"Flora! Lay down, now!"

Flora did as she was asked to do, but then shook her head.

"What the... What's going on? Where am I?" She looked up to see Faragonda, with a look that had many emotions.

Flora grimaced.

"I suppose you deserve an explanation." Faragonda looked out the window. "About a week ago, you and your friends snuck out of Alfea, against my demands that you stay put. A week ago, you and Bloom personally went through events no one should have to."

"I... I was out for a week?"

"Mostly for the safety of others. You had been corrupted by a vampire."

"Oh... Did I... Kill anyone?"

Faragonda went silent for a brief moment, before she sighed. "The monster that killed Techna, Musa and Stella. Even if he could be saved, his condition would be of pure agony."

Flora shuddered and held herself.

"I... I killed someone... like that?"

"It wasn't your fault Flora. It was the corruption that flows in your veins. The only course of action is to try and get your vampire side under control."

"...Where's Bloom?"

"Safe and sound, though I will have to have a talk with you and her after all of you recovered."

Flora recognized that 'Faragonda glare' that always filled her with dread.

She was disappointed in her.

"I... understand."

"Don't worry, Flora. The worst has passed. I'm arranging for you to go back to your home at Lynphea with your family soon. You need time off to... calm down."

"Thank you, Miss Faragonda."

"You're welcome Flora. Now, I must go back to Alfea. I have duties there that must be taken care of. Goodbye." Faragonda left the room, taking one last look at Bloom before flying back to Alfea.

She wondered what the future would hold now.

She soon made it back to the school and calmly walked back to her office.

When she walked into her office, she saw a familiar sight.

"This is the second visit you've given me Fand."

"Yes, the first to explain the loops to you since you're a non-looper, and now I'm here to discuss an new important matter at hand." Fand said, flipping a coin for the umpteenth time.

"Flora?"

"Yes." Fand sat down in a chair, letting Faragonda sit down in her own chair. "You see, Flora had just went through a lot of trauma, and I'm currently waiting on my boss to stop sitting on the paperwork I sent in to send Flora away to another Branch... or three. So as of this moment, until the process is over, I'm going to try and keep things safe here."

"But you do know that-"

"I'm not going to baby Flora. She's a fully grown adult in a teenager's body. I'd rather let her sort her small potatoes out first before I help with the truly important stuff that no Looper can do."

Faragonda blinked and swiveled her chair to the wall.

"Fair enough. Just promise me that you won't meddle in the affairs of anyone else."

"Faragonda, with all due respect, since I'm in charge of watching this Branch, it's as much my job to watch everyone else as it is to watch Flora. I'm not making any promises that I'll break immediately, especially the ones you'll never remember."

Faragonda took a deep breath.

"Alright, good luck on your mission."

"Thank you. I will take my leave." Fand disappeared and found herself back in her workplace. She walked back to her terminal when she saw Athena, no doubt on break, drinking tea.

"Athena." Fand sat down on her chair.

Sipping her tea, Athena looked at Fand.

"Don't you think you're being too proactive with your Loopers, Fand?"

"No, I don't think so. Flora just went through a nightmare. She needs something to take the edge off, so I am sending her to nature based Loops... for the most part."

"Right then." Athena rolled her eyes. "Just try not to go crazy with your shipping frenzy. Loopers are not toys for our amusement, they're actual living beings."

"Didn't you kill some beings for amusement?"

"You're thinking of Ares, I merely taught the mortals that you have to follow the rules, or suffer the consequences."

"Or being disrespected."

"Fand..." Athena glared with her grey eyes.

"Lords, I hope he screws up big. He's getting haughty with himself, being in charge of Shepard's Branch. Speaking of which, I must-"

"AREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEES!"

"Was that Tyr?" Fand looked out of her cubicle.

"Oh, this I have to see!" Athena walked off. Fand then took out a notebook and flipped through the pages.

Spike and Rarity were already checked off, and now there was her next project. She smiled and got to adjusting some variables.

"Soon, my lovelies, you'll be together, just as you should be." Fand flashed a deranged smile.

A/N from AwesomeDude17: Thank you for reading this magnificent story of tragedy. This attempt at drama was not my first, but it certainly is something I've thought up spontaneously. So yeah, some things set straight, this is really early in the Winx Club timeline, though you already figured that. Additionally, I've figured that since Flora had so many friends, she had to have enemies that weren't MLEs. Hence why I decided to put her, a Guardian of Nature, against a literal hunter of dangerous living beings, that being the infamous Predator (this particular one went solo against a gang that stole his species' tech, and survived his exile on another planet with nothing more than wrist blades for 100 years.)

If you enjoyed it, glad to hear. Leave a review and check out all the other loop stories such as the Nintendo Loops, the MLP loops and so many more.

Note from Firehawk242: What can I say? AwesomeDude17 lives up to his name. Proofreading and continuity maintenance credit goes to Purrs, Solaris Requiem, and myself, but the writing was all AwesomeDude's. Stay tuned for more loops, because we're far from done.

Chapter 18

"Oh, Junior, I was just playing with you," Aisha said. "Don't be so sensitive! C'mon, let's kiss and make up, okay?"

"Huh?" Hei "Junior" Xiong grunted. Aisha giggled. "Okay..." Junior said.

The two leaned in. Then Aisha punched Junior across the club, sending him through a glass pillar in the process. She dropped into a fighting stance as the thugs around her started to move, the bracelets on her wrists extending into full gauntlets. She cocked the shotguns inside the gauntlets, loading in the next round as she prepared for a fight.

And then she Awoke.

Well, she'd Awoken in worse situations before. Once. Maybe twice. But this was pretty high up there on her list of bad Awakenings. She was outnumbered, she didn't have time to transform, and there's only so much boxing can do against axes and machetes. None of her out-of-loop abilities would be able to get her out of this one. So she dove into her in-loop identity in search of aid.

She broke into a grin.

Her loop memories took hold and she *jumped.* No ordinary human or fairy could jump like this without magic or other supernatural abilities, but she did so with ease, hurling herself a solid thirty feet straight up. Then she came back down, pink fire trailing in her wake as she slammed her fist into the ground with an explosion. Her body went into auto-pilot, fighting with the ease of years of practice as one by one she beat the thugs into unconsciousness. As she did so, she could feel a strange energy flowing through her, giving her strength, speed, and protection. Her loop memories called the energy her

Aura, her soul made manifest. Whatever it was, it was letting her kick these goons around like so many soccer balls.

The DJ, who for some reason had a teddy bear helmet that did not at all match the assault rifle in his hands, open fire from his balcony. Aisha took the opportunity to transform, her Sirenix wings flashing into existence as she launched herself through the air at her attacker. Morphix met Aura Fire as her spell formed, and a flaming whip of pink goo lashed out to smack the DJ into unconsciousness. Aisha took a moment to marvel at the interaction of her magic with her new powers before releasing her transformation.

"Melanie, who is this girl?" a girl dressed in red and armed with claws that even Wolverine would respect asked.

"I dunno Miltia," her white clad twin said, the blades on her stiletto heels shining, "but we should teach her a lesson."

Aisha turned and faced her opponents. Miltia and Melanie were expecting a simple brawler. What they got was something rather different.

Aisha finished the brawl with an Aura and magic empowered punch that hurled "Junior" through the front window of his own club. She followed him through the window and landed in a crouch in front of the very unconscious gang leader.

"Yang?" a girl in a red cloak asked. "No, not Yang."

Aisha looked up at the girl in front of her, the name surfacing from her loop memories instantly. "You're Ruby," Aisha said. A realization hit her. "You're looping?"

"Anchor, actually!" Ruby said. "Hi, I'm Ruby Rose, Anchor for Remnant!"

"Aisha, I'm from the Winx loops," Aisha said.

"Cool, what are they like?" Ruby asked.

"Fairies, witches, and magic," Aisha said.

"Ooh, neat!" Ruby replied. "Can you show me some magic? Are you a fairy? What's flying like?"

Aisha stared at the adorable red-and-black-wearing little bundle of energy in front of her. Who was apparently her little sister for the loop. Then she grinned. She'd Awoken in better foreign loops before. Once. Maybe twice. But this place was already pretty high up there on her list of favorite loops.

18.2 (Awesomedude17)

"You sure you want to do this?" Little Mac asked one last time as he put on his boxing gloves.

"Yes." Aisha replied.

"Alright then. The WVBA hasn't really allowed women to compete before..."

"And I intend to show them how I do it."

Little Mac chuckled as he looked over to their trainer. "Alright then, Aisha. Go for the champion belt."

"Alright you two, let's get to training." Doc Louis said, taking a bite out of his candy bar.

18.3 (lord Martiya)

To Darcy, that was a good Loop. Sure, she was living in a giant metal tube, had an old cop trying to hit on her, a commander that hated her on principle and desperately tried to deny her crush for her and an alien marsupial who wanted her DNA, and Icy was being Icy, but she

was making good money and was being paid to improve her mental skills, Stormy got a job working as a union representative at the docks (and had been surprisingly competent), and people were generally likeable if one knew how to deal with them. And she did.

And now her second favourite guy from this Loop was coming to her. Either she was going to have fun, or something terrible was about to happen.

"Good morning, ambassador Mollari. How can I help you today?" she greeted him.

"Good morning to you, miss Trix." the ambassador replied. "Please, could you indulge an old man's curiosity?"

"As you wish. What do you want to know?"

"Well, I noticed that Vir's human 'assistant' not only looks like you but even shares your last name."

"She's my sister."

"Really? I didn't know the Corps allowed their members to keep relationships with outsiders."

"I was found when I was already a teen, and as long as I do my job they don't care too much."

"And you let her get in that trouble?"

"My other sister and her wanted manipulation lessons. I did warn them, but Icy has this habit of not listening…"

"And so she pestered my attache until he decided to give her a lesson?

"And so she pestered Vir Cotto until he decided to give her a lesson! At least he won't get her into troubles she can't blow her way out of…"

"Poor girl… I almost pity her."

"Enough to not bet on how long it'll take her to catch on how the future emperor is giving her a lesson?"

"Why do you assume she'll catch on?"

"Icy isn't stupid, she's bound to catch on."

Then Icy ran by holding Morden's frozen head, chased by a dozen thugs from the Down Below, two guys from Security, Bester, a Technomage with a holodemon, the Abbai ambassador, Na'toth, lord Refa, Urza Jaddo, Morden's associates (visible to all), and Kosh.

"Then again, I may be underestimating Vir Cotto again…" Darcy admitted.

18.4 (Awesomedude17)

"You mean to tell me that this SCP-682 *ate* Billy?" Techna asked incredulously.

"Yes, and you know what happened?" Dr. Glass downed his glass.

"What?"

"Reality ceased to exist. Everything broke into nothingness, without a crash, for 50 years!"

"Oh my! That's horrible!"

"And that's not the worst part."

"How could it be worse?"

"SCP-682 survived the event."

18.5 (Firehawk242, Detective Ethan Redfield)

Flora really wasn't sure she why she kept finding herself in this loop. Sure, she liked the local loopers, well, most of them, but that didn't mean she liked the loop itself. And that was when Shepard was Awake and the loop was doing a baseline run. Neither of those things were true for this loop.

The Normandy's quest was always difficult. From the SR-1's adventures hunting Saren to the SR-2's fight against the Collectors and later scramble for the Crucible, life was never easy for them. It wasn't supposed be this hard though. Although that might be because Flora was the only one Awake.

Flora sent a surge of magic ripping into the Geth dropship that was impeding their progress towards the Council chambers and Saren. The ship exploded, taking out all the Geth in the area.

"Good job Flora," Shepard said. "Let's go."

Flora nodded. They had to hurry. Going by past experience, they were running late, and Saren wasn't going to wait for them to call down the Reapers.

"Keelah," Tali muttered as she caught up with Flora and Shepard. "I have no idea how we'd have made it this far without you, Flora."

"Thank me when we stop Saren," Flora said.

The three women rushed along the spire, tearing through the various obstacles in their path. Flora was getting nervous. There weren't usually this many enemies! They were running out of time!

Finally they burst through a hatch to land in the Council chambers to find a swarm of Geth in the way.

"Oh for- Shock Fan!" Flora said, utterly fed up with the constant obstructions. Lightning sprayed from her hand, arcing from platform to platform, forcing them into shutdown.

"That's new," Shepard commented quietly.

"Move!" Flora said. They were way behind schedule! Who knew what Saren had managed to do by now?

"Shepard." Speak of the devil, and he shall appear. "You are too late," Saren said. "In mere moments the Reapers will use the Citadel relay to return to the Galaxy. There is nothing you can do to stop them."

"No!" Shepard said. "There's still time, we can stop this from happening."

"It's too late," Saren said. "The relay has been activated."

"He's right," Tali said, glancing at her omnitool. "Keelah."

"Your efforts were in vain," Saren said. "The Reapers cannot be st-"

BOOM.

Flora lowered the shotgun she'd just unloaded in the former Spectre's face. He fell to the ground, dead. "Shepard, there's still a chance to stop this," Flora said. "I can do it, I just need you to open the Citadel's arms."

"What are you going to do?" Shepard asked.

"Whatever it takes to save the galaxy," Flora said. "Enchantix." Her armor vanished and her wings appeared. "Go, open the Citadel. I'm going to stop the Reapers." She pulled a layer of air around herself with her magic and flew out the hatch.

Shepard and Tali stared for a moment, then hurried to the control panel.

Flora flew out into space, her magic protecting her from the environment. It wasn't her loop. It wasn't her home. She was the only one who would remember it. But she refused to bear witness to a galactic genocide. She flew towards the ugly black shape wrapped around the Citadel's spire that was Sovereign. That would have to go first.

"Solar Beam," Flora announced, feeding her magic into the attack in lieu of sunlight. She reached full power, then fired. A beam of focused light shot from her hand and sliced into the Reaper, utterly ignoring the thing's shields as it bored through the hull. A moment passed as the thing screamed, then it fell silent as the beam eviscerated it, releasing its hold on the Citadel.

"Any moment now," Flora muttered, flitting over to land on the top of the now vacant spire. There was a sudden trembling as the arms of the Citadel started to open to reveal a sky full of Reapers. Thousands of Reapers. Tens of thousands. Maybe more. Their whole fleet was here and it was carving into the Citadel fleet and Geth fleets alike.

"No more," Flora muttered, secure in her personal air bubble. She began to chant.

"I am the soul of my spells.

Nature is my body and magic is my blood.

I have lived a thousand lives.

I am life, I am death.

I am Nature's Guardian.

I have no regrets, life will prevail.

So I become, Unlimited Fairy Works."

All around her dozens of copies of herself appeared wearing the various transformations Flora had earned over the loops. From her Charmix to Sirenix and beyond, every one of forms was represented a hundred times over in the storm of fairy wings. And then magic burst from each of the copies, reaching out like claws for the unnatural ships of the Reapers.

In moments the dread fleet was torn to pieces, scattered to the solar wind by the power of Nature incarnate.

Flora's eyes shot open a moment later. She rubbed her mouth, clearing away a bit of spittle as she kicked her legs over the bunk and jumped up. After suiting up, she made her way to the bridge of the Normandy, where Shepard stood, staring at the unexplored planet before them. The commander turned slightly and nodded to his fellow looper, "Trouble sleeping? Nightmares?"

Flora just shook her head and took in the planet in the viewport. The thought of a new adventure on an unexplored planet filled the fairy with determination.

18.6 (Awesomedude17)

"Hello ladies!"

Flora sighed as she turned to the person. "Deadpool... Who's that?"

Deadpool looked at the teenaged girl who was currently texting on her phone.

"Oh, that's just my best co-star from my newest hit movie called Negasonic Teenage Warhead. She's your typical emo girl who's also a living bomb."

"...How nice. Nice to meet you."

"Sure." Negasonic replied.

"Uh huh. Wade."

"Yep?"

Flora looked around, making sure no one else is around.

"Do you have a copy of your movie?"

"Sure thing buddy." Deadpool held out a DVD disk.

"Thanks!" Flora said, taking the DVD.

"No problem, friend. Oh yeah, we're friends. She's friends with almost everyone... except Dio Brando... And that Predator... and I'm pretty sure Billy's in there too, but he's on everyone's shit list..."

Flora walked away as Deadpool rambled on about how MLE's (and Dolores Umbridge) can suck it.

18.7 (Evilhumour)

Flora Awoke to find her mind a complete mess.

Not in the usual intoxicated sense of the word; her memories were so *vast* and spread out over various overlapping and contradicting memories.

With serious effort, she began to pull her mind together to paint a picture of who was she was replacing until she felt two things; the single most complex and painful headache she *ever* had and then a slap to the back of her head.

"Oi, Looper, *not* a good idea trying to read memories like *that* ," a voice snarked, androgynous as well as alluring too...

"Slaanesh?" Flora asked, looking at the Chaos God glare at her before breaking into an impish grin that rubbed Flora the wrong way.

"Of course, there's no one *else* that can be *me* ," Slaanesh grinned, leaning in close to Flora's face. "Well, I know the same isn't true for you two anymore..."

"What are you-" Flora's mind finally kicked in as she observed herself. She was a rotting, massive diseased creature of vast illnesses pouring from her bo- "Wait, *why* did you say that?"

Slaanesh grinned to hirself, which should have worried Flora instantly. "Tell me, life breaking down, grumbling down to nothing, all matter receding to the bare minimum only to feed back into itself?"

"Nature," Flora answered without responding.

" *And* Nurgle," Slaanesh held up a clawed finger. "Nurgle is nature, more or less, although focused on the less appeasing aspects in most loops, Flurgle."

"I see what you mean-wait, *Flurgle?* " She asked, tilting her head.

" *Yes* ," Slaanesh purred out. "Flora. Nurgle. Flurgle."

Flora sighed heavily, slapping a gooey hand into her face. She then frowned, and focused on changing her current aspects to fit the more... *positive* aspects of nature.

Blinking, she was now a stunning green plant-like creature similar to her own normal features, dressed in...

" *Slaanesh!* " She hissed, her arms covering her body.

"What?" Slaanesh grumbled, looking over hir shoulder.

"What did you do to me?"

"Hm?" Slaanesh looked at her, and tilted hir head. "What?"

"I'm covered by *leaves* ," Flora hissed back.

"And?" Slaanesh said. "In all honesty, it's only a five point six."

"Really?!"

"Yes Flurgle," Slaanesh smirked as shi changed hirself to match Flora's current body exactly. With a pose, Flora's checks blossomed into roses as she now felt *very* conservative when her decency was covered by three leaves. "See?"

Trying to get her mind back under control as well rid herself of the roses on her face. "How much longer is this loop going to be?"

"Awww, Flurgle," Slaanesh walked over to pinch her cheek, still looking exactly like Flora. "It *just* started-oh look, the Emperor was just created!"

Flora whimpered; this was going to be a *long* one.

Faragonda sat in her office, going over paperwork. Over a month had passed and she was *still* dealing with the mess Bloom had created by pretending to be Princess Varanda of Callisto, though Faragonda didn't hold it against the girl. Though she was quite the mystery, Faragonda mused. The only fairy to come from Earth in a generation, no one knew how she'd come about. Strangely, there was something about the young fairy that was almost familiar to the old headmistress. Like a sound on the edge of hearing, or a face only seen out of the corner of an eye. Oh well, the truth would out itself eventually.

There was a knocking at her door.

"Come in," Faragonda said, pushing her paperwork to the side.

The door opened to reveal Griselda and a young girl, maybe thirteen or so. She was obviously exhausted and had a number of injuries on

her body. Her pink hair was matted and dirty, and her clothes were torn in various places. "Hello," the girl said, smiling weakly.

"Miss Faragonda, I tried to take this girl to the infirmary, but she insisted on speaking with you first," Griselda said.

"What is so important that you had to speak to me immediately, young lady?" Faragonda asked.

"My name is Roxy," the girl said. "I am, or, I was I guess, the last fairy of Earth."

"But we have a fairy from Earth enrolled right now," Faragonda said.

"Bloom?" Roxy said. "She's not from Earth. She's the crown princess of Domino."

Faragonda blinked. That was impossible! But at the same time, something in the back of her mind asked if she was so certain. Bloom seemed so familiar. Now that Faragonda considered it... yes, she could see it. She was Oritel and Miriam's daughter. That was why she seemed so familiar!

"How do you know this?" Faragonda asked.

Roxy stiffened. "Oh, uh..." She fidgeted for a bit. "Can I not answer that one?"

"Very well," Faragonda said. "But what was so important that you had to speak to me immediately?"

Roxy straightened up. "I... I made a mistake," she said. "I... I found out what happened to the fairies of Earth, and where they were imprisoned by the Wizards of the Black Circle. The Wizards came after me when I started using my magic, so I've been dodging them for a while. I found the White Circle and used it to free the fairies of Earth, but, well, they're angry. They blame the humans for what happened to them."

"The fairies of Earth have returned?" Griselda asked. "That's very good news."

"No it's not!" Roxy said. "Well, it is, but what they're going to do isn't! They're going to start a war with the humans! I tried to stop it, but they're too angry and powerful."

Faragonda shared a look with Griselda before turning back to the girl. "We'll do everything we can to help," Faragonda said. "In the meantime, will you let Nurse Ophelia take a look at you?"

"Okay," Roxy said.

"Flora! Techna! Musa! Bloom! Aisha!" Stella shouted, waving her arms animatedly as she barreled into the Winx dorms.

"What's up?" Flora asked, looking up from her book. She spared a quick glance to Aisha. The two girls were the only ones Awake this time and they were playing things close to baseline. The only change of note was Aisha's early enrollment in Alfea. Stella's excitement, however, was not according to the script. Given that it was Stella though, this could mean almost anything. It was probably just a sale or something.

"There's a fairy from Earth!" Stella said.

Oh. That wasn't a sale.

"I thought Bloom was the only fairy from Earth," Techna said.

"Turns out she's not!" Stella said. "The new girl, her name's Roxy, says she freed all the Earth fairies!"

"And how do you know all this?" Musa asked.

"Oh!" Stella said. "Well, I was kind of walking past the infirmary and saw her there and went to introduce myself, and she told me all

about it. Oh, and she wants to talk to us. She asked for me to get the rest of the Winx."

"We have a reputation?" Bloom asked.

"I guess," Aisha said, looking over at Flora.

"We should go talk to her," Flora said. "She did ask for us."

"You're right," Stella said, calming down a bit. "Let's go."

"How do you want to handle this?" Aisha whispered to Flora.

"I don't know," Flora whispered back. "It's possible this is just a variant."

"You really believe that?" Aisha asked.

"No, but I don't want to get my hopes up if I'm wrong," Flora said.

"And if you're right?" Aisha asked.

"Then we get to add a new member to the family," Flora said.

"Hey, what are you two chatting about?" Musa asked.

"Nothing," Aisha said as Bloom pushed open the door and the Winx made their way into the infirmary.

"Hey," said the girl, leaning back in one of the hospital-style beds. The back was elevated, leaving the young girl in a sitting position.

"Hi," Bloom said. "I'm Bloom. This is Flora," she pointed to the brown haired fairy, "Techna," the pinkette, "Musa," the tomboy, "Aisha," the dusky skinned girl, "and you already met Stella."

"It's nice to meet you," Roxy said.

"How did you know the name 'Winx'?" Musa asked.

Roxy looked away for a moment. "I... I don't know," she said. "I just did."

"How did you know Stella was one of us?" Bloom asked.

"I just did," Roxy repeated.

"Memory magic, perhaps," Techna said. "Would you mind if I did a scan of you?"

"Nurse Ophelia already did a scan and she didn't find anything," Roxy said. "But thanks for offering."

"Is there anything we can do for you?" Bloom asked.

"No," Roxy said. "I just wanted to see you girls."

"Okay then," Stella said. "We'll just be going back to our room then."

"Okay, see you later," Roxy said.

"Well, that was weird," Musa said as they left the room.

"Why do you think she wanted to see us?" Stella asked.

"It's almost like she knew us," Bloom said.

"I know," Aisha said. "Strange."

"Perhaps her memory was tampered with," Techna said.

"She said Nurse Ophelia didn't find anything," Bloom said dubiously.

"That might be because she wasn't looking for memory magic," Techna muttered.

"Girls?" Flora said. "Do you mind if I go keep Roxy company for a bit? She's on her own and she's had a rough time. She's probably feeling lonely."

"Sure, Flora," Stella said. "Let us know if she says anything."

"I will," Flora said.

Flora pushed open the door to thee infirmary and poked her head in. "Hey, can I come in?"

Roxy looked up. "Weren't you going back to your room?"

"I decided to keep you company for a bit, is that alright?" Flora asked.

"I guess," Roxy said.

"Good," Flora said, sitting down on the bed next to Roxy's. "So, how did you know who we are?"

"I'm sorry," Roxy said. "I don't know."

"It's alright, Roxy," Flora said. "You can tell me anything. I won't tell anyone outside this room if you don't want me to."

"I don't think you'd believe me if I told you," Roxy said.

"I'd believe a lot more than you'd think," Flora said, reaching into her pocket and pulling out a photo album. Roxy's eyes widened in surprise and Flora started looking through the book. "Oh where is it?" Flora muttered. "This would be so much easier if Techna was here. She has all of our pictures on one of her data drives... ah, here it is." She pulled out a photo and handed it to Roxy.

"This is-" Roxy stared in disbelief at the photo in her hand.

"A picture you took of us performing at the Fruity Music Bar, three and a half years from now," Flora said. "I know."

"I remember taking a photo like this," Roxy said quietly. "This one looks old."

"It is," Flora said. "Even with magic, there's only so much you can do to prevent photos from aging. I have to replace the physical photo pretty often."

"I guess I can see that," Roxy said. "So, now what?"

"Now?" Flora said with a smile. "Now I explain what's going on."

"You know what's happening to us?" Roxy asked.

"I do," Flora said. "It's good to see you again, Roxy. Welcome to the Infinite Loops."

Author's Notes:

18.1: Oh dear. Flaming Morphix. That's going to be destructive.

18.2: I pity the poor people she's going to punch out.

18.3: Okay, this one requires some explanation. I (Firehawk242) recently rebooted the Babylon 5 loops with Vir as the Anchor. Vir has since turned into Yggdrasil's greatest master manipulator. Shenanigans ensued.

18.4: Billy. That is all.

18.5: Originally non-canon, later made usable via dream sequence. Flora can't actually use Unlimited Fairy Works outside of a Fate loop, as she's simply too sane to retain the ability. Also, she really doesn't need that much power.

18.6: And now I need to explain Deadpool too. He's not looping. He is, however, Deadpool. Make sense? No? *Good.*

18.7: Well, that's traumatizing.

18.8: Welcome to the Loops, Roxy!

Chapter 19

19.1 (lord Martiya)

A furious and drenched Musa barged into the main hall of Cloud Tower shouting Stormy's name.

"Yes dear?" Stormy replied.

"I've just been attacked by every single Cloud Tower student with a weather-based powerset but you. Explain!"

"Just doing them a favor. You see, the ability to harness lightning tends to make us feel invincible. I have been mostly cured of that by having Icy as a sister, and a certain encounter during an infiltration took care of the rest, but those girls didn't have such luck… So I dared them to attack you, knowing it would be painful and humiliating enough to make them learn but they wouldn't die."

"That's obvious! Why did you do that NOW?!"

"Uh?"

"We were about to go out shopping." Darcy explained in a dangerously sweet voice.

"Oh… Well… I-"

"LOOK! A DISTRACTION!" Icy shouted pointing at the gate.

And, amazingly, it actually distracted Darcy and Musa long enough to enable Icy and Stormy's escape.

19.2

"So what am *I* supposed to do for the next three years?" Roxy demanded.

"Uh..." Bloom said. "Live on Earth?"

"Great," Roxy said. "So while you girls spend three years attending Alfea and having adventures I have to stay at home and serve smoothies."

"Well you're not old enough to attend Alfea," Bloom said.

"And it's not like there's anywhere else you can stay," Musa added.

Roxy glared at the Winx for a moment before letting out a sigh. "Alright, *fine* . At least help me deal with mom and the rest of my relatives before you go, alright?"

"Certainly!" Stella said.

"This isn't going to end well, is it?" Techna whispered to Flora.

"Probably not," Flora replied. "But it'll be fun to watch."

"Did you hear?" Flora said. "Earth's appointed a liaison to Magix in the interests of smoothing over Earth's return to the Magic Dimension."

"Like an ambassador?" Bloom asked.

"Exactly," Flora said. "They're trying to put their best foot forward."

"So who is it?" Aisha asked. "Nebula's their Regent right now, so it can't be her. A shame, given that she's supposed to be the Major Fairy of Peace."

"Morgana's in retirement with her husband," Musa said. "Diana?"

"No," Bloom said. "She's not very good at negotiating, and Aurora's even worse. Sibylla?"

"She's supposed to be neutral in everything," Techna said. "I don't think she'd make a good ambassador. Besides, she's busy being the Major Fairy of Justice."

"So who's left?" Stella asked. "We covered everyone important."

"Why don't we just watch the news and find out?" Flora suggested.

"Good idea," Musa said. "Where's that remote?"

"And in a surprise move, the Earth Fairy state of Tir Nan Og announced that it would be represented by none other than Princess Roxy," the news caster announced.

"What?" Bloom said, doing a double take. "Roxy? But she's thirteen!"

"Princess Roxy is the single most notable fairy of Earth," the news caster continued. *"Responsible for the rescue of the entire population of Tir Nan Og, the defeat of the Wizards of the Black Circle, and the peaceful return of magic to Earth, Princess Roxy is considered a national hero by many, despite her young age. Now she seeks to bring about the return of Earth to the Magic Dimension."*

"Well, this should be interesting," Flora said with a smile.

"When asked about her appointment, Princess Roxy had this to say:" The broadcast switched to a video clip of the pink-haired fairy herself. *"Well it's a big honor of course, and it's going to take a lot of work, but I'm looking forward to it. Earth has been separated from the Magic Dimension for too long, and it's time we fixed that. There's a lot of work ahead of us, but I think it'll be more than worth it in the end."* The news caster returned. *"Princess Roxy has announced that she will be moving to Magix full-time for the foreseeable future. An*

embassy is already under construction in the city. Citing the need to continue her own education, she has also announced her plans to spend some of her free time studying at the prestigious Alfea College for Fairies. If accepted, she will be the youngest student to attend the school in centuries, but perhaps also one of the most talented. We look forward to seeing what she will accomplish. This has been Magix News, thank you for watching."

The TV clicked off as Musa pushed the power button on the remote.

Aisha was the one who finally broke the silence. "So, who wants to bet that she did this just to prove that she could get into Alfea at thirteen?"

"I don't think you're going to get any takers on that bet," Bloom said. "Roxy really doesn't like being told she can't do something."

"Yes, because we don't have *anyone* like that in *this* room," Musa said, sending the entire team into giggles.

"What do you think her first words will be when she gets here?" Flora asked.

"I'd rather not think about it too much," Bloom said. "I'm sure I'm going to be hearing about this for a very long time."

"Welcome to the loops," Musa said. "Where you can tell someone 'I told you so' for eternity."

Bloom moaned and buried her face in her hands.

Flora smiled. This was going to be a fun loop.

19.3 (lord Martiya)

"So, let me this straight: a few Loops ago you single-handedly rescued all of Earth's fairies, defeated the Black Circle Wannabes,

returned magic to your homeworld, and had yourself appointed as ambassador just to prove you could enter Alfea at thirteen?" Icy asked the Terran princess.

"Yes..." Roxy replied, ready to fight or escape from those she remembered only as three deranged enemies.

"Perfect! Next time we crash Mitzi's halloween party you're the fourth sister!"

"What?"

"Dear, what you did was exactly what WE would have done." Darcy explained. "We started out trying to steal the Dragon's Flame just because we'd been told we would never surpass our Ancestors, and that was one thing they failed to do... By the way, you should find a good shrink just in case. If it's a Looper, tell me."

19.4

"So what's up with Roxy's name?" Seras asked.

"What do you mean?" Flora asked her adoptive sister.

"I mean what's up with her name?" Seras said. "I thought all fairy's names ended in the letter a. Well, except for Bloom, but she's the exception that proves the rule."

"Not every fairy's name ends in a," Flora said. "I mean there's... Well, there's... Okay, you've got me. That's weird, I can't believe I never noticed that."

"Oh, but it gets better," Seras said. "Roxy's name ends in a y, right?"

"Right..." Flora said cautiously.

"Well, that clearly means she's a witch!" Seras proclaimed triumphantly. "After all, the only witch in your loop whose name

doesn't end in a y is Griffin!"

"There's Selina," Flora said.

"She's from the corrupted part of your loop," Seras replied. "She doesn't count."

"So you think Roxy's secretly a witch?" Flora asked.

"Yep," Seras said. "She fits the naming convention!"

"I think you're being silly," Flora said.

"Oh really?" Seras said. "Mark my words, one of these days she'll be a witch, trust me on that."

"Seras, this is the Infinite Loops," Flora said. "Variants happen all the time. I've been a witch. Timmy's been a witch. *Kiko's* been a witch."

"Bloom's rabbit was a witch?" Seras asked.

"Once," Flora said. "It's a long, long, long story. Not to mention painful, embarrassing, and disturbing."

"You got beaten by a bunny," Seras said.

"Yes," Flora said. "Yes I did. And if you tell anyone I will tell that story about the time you lost to a banana with legs."

"My lips are sealed," Seras promised.

"Good," Flora said.

19.5 (Awesomedude17)

Bloom stumbled into Mac's Bar, completely sloshed. Harry Dresden sighed and cast a spell to sober her up.

"HEY!"

"What happened?"

Bloom groaned and then sat down.

"Okay, you know Warhammer 40K?"

"Who doesn't? Almost up there for me, but Star Wars is more fun. Just don't say Little Orphan Annie around Anakin."

"Well... apparently, we installed a text to speech program into the Golden Throne last time I was there."

"Oh, you were in that variant?" A new voice spoke up. Bloom turned to see a man clad completely in golden armor.

"Uh yeah. Wait, who are you?"

"The Captain General of the Adeptus Custodes. I usually handle The Man Emperor of Mankind during those Loops. So, how was it being his personal caretaker?" Little Kitten introduced himself in the least embarrassing way he can.

"Between Valtor being Magnus, a Male, Unawake Stella as Rogal Dorn, the Trix as those male strippers and the fact that Flora as an Ork derailed the Baseline by crashing a hoverbike into the Throne Room and getting everyone drunk on fungus beer... I'd say that me coming here on a pub run was justified."

"Holy shit, that's one of the milder responses." Little Kitten muttered under his breath before speaking up. "Well, sounds like you had a rough time. Don't worry, you'll get used to it."

"I doubt it. Mac, Guinness!"

"Wait, the Trix as the male strippers? Like the Trix rabbit?" Harry said, confused.

"Oh no, they're the rest of the Adeptus Custodes. They've gotten... less sane over the years."

"Okay, Warhammer 40K is now at my bottom due to male strippers. Thanks, bud."

19.6

Flora woke up and slowly rose from the bed she and Techna shared. The other fairy murmured unhappily in her sleep, complaining about the sudden loss of warmth. Flora smiled and carefully tucked the blanket back up around Techna's chin. She made another quiet whimper, then settled back into the bed. Flora smiled and laid a gentle kiss on Techna's cheek, then turned and walked over to the window. She carefully opened the blinds and looked out on the quad and the unusual state it was in.

Winter had come to Alfea. That might not seem particularly unusual, but Alfea, like the rest of Magix, enjoyed a warm and consistent climate. Cold usually meant people wearing long sleeves instead of t-shirts, maybe with the occasional sweater. However, every once in while, Winter actually did descend upon the school, wrapping it up in her glittering splendor.

Flora looked out the window and smiled. A fresh layer of snow had fallen overnight, turning Alfea into a sparkling construct straight out of a dream. Light snowflakes still danced on the winds, glittering in the sunlight. Winter might not come often to Alfea, but when it did, it was beautiful.

"Flora?" Techna asked, her voice blurry with sleep.

"Yes?" Flora said, turning around.

"Oh," Techna said, blinking the sleep from her eyes as she sat up. "There you are."

"Right here," Flora said cheerfully.

"Did it snow again last night?" Techna asked.

"Yes," Flora said. "Would you like to take a look? It's really pretty."

"Maybe once I'm fully awake," Techna said, getting out of bed.

"You know you used to be a morning person," Flora teased. "What happened to my morning girl?"

"She discovered she liked sleeping in a lot more when she wasn't sleeping alone," Techna said, kissing Flora's cheek.

Flora smiled. "We should get dressed, they'll be serving breakfast soon."

The two fairies made their way into the Great Hall, seeking breakfast, only to be ambushed by their red haired friend.

"There you two are," Bloom said.

"Good morning to you too, Bloom," Flora said. "What's up?"

"Stella's taking advantage of the cold weather to showcase her lineup of Winter fashions," Bloom said. "She managed to rope Musa and me into serving as models."

"And Aisha?" Techna asked.

"She volunteered," Bloom said ruefully. "I don't suppose the two of you..."

"Sorry Bloom, but I think we'll sit this one out," Flora said. "But have fun."

"I'll try," Bloom said, shaking her head. "Well, at least you'll know where the four of us are if you decide to go looking. I'll see you girls

later."

"What do you want to do today?" Techna asked.

"Well we don't have any classes today," Flora said. "I was thinking we could make it an 'us' day. We haven't had one in a while. Maybe we can go explore Magix?"

"Sure," Techna said. "That'd be nice." Her stomach interrupted the conversation, growling. "Breakfast first though."

"Breakfast first," Flora agreed.

The two fairies stepped out into the snow, bundled up in their winter coats against the cold.

"I know snow's pretty, but why does it have to be so cold?" Techna muttered.

"Isn't your home world cold?" Flora asked.

"And why do you think I came to Alfea for schooling?" Techna asked.

"So you could meet me?" Flora suggested.

"Among other things," Techna said. She paused as a snowflake danced in front of her face. She followed it until it settled on her nose, making her go cross-eyed.

Flora laughed. "I think the snow likes you."

"Really?" Techna said with a skeptical but fond smile. "It's snow. I don't think it cares."

"No really, it likes you," Flora insisted. "It wants to give you a hug. Here, let me show you." She pulled a snowball out from behind her back and smiled.

"Oh no," Techna said. "Flora, don't you dare- ack!" The snowball hit the front of her coat and exploded. "Alright, you're on!" Techna said, swooping down to make her own snowball.

The two fairies laughed as they waged their snow war across Alfea's quad.

"Do I still have snow in my hair?" Flora asked as she sat down on the couch in their room.

"If you did it's probably melted by now," Techna said. "Here." She handed Flora a steaming mug of hot chocolate.

"Thank you," Flora said, carefully taking the mug and sipping the liquid warmth.

"The weather's getting worse," Techna said, sitting down next to Flora and sipping from her own mug.

"I know," Flora said, looking out the window. "It's still pretty though."

"It's almost one," Techna said. "You wanted to head into the city?"

"At some point," Flora said. "But we should probably get lunch first."

Techna considered for a moment, then nodded. "Lunch sounds good."

"And then we'll catch the bus to Magix," Flora said.

"Alright, thanks," Flora said to the person manning the information desk. She headed back to Techna. "We just missed it," Flora said. "The next one's not for another forty minutes."

"Well, there's no point waiting here for it," Techna said. "Do you want to go back to the room?"

"Sure," Flora said.

Flora glanced up from where she and Techna were curled up together on the couch and caught sight of the clock. "Oops."

"What is it?" Techna asked, leaning back against Flora as she read her book.

"We missed the bus," Flora said with a laugh.

"Really?" Techna asked, glancing up as well. "It's only been- oh."

"An hour and a half," Flora said. "The sun'll be setting soon."

"It is Winter," Techna commented.

"Stella and the others will be back soon," Flora said.

"Probably," Techna said.

"You don't want to get up, do you?" Flora asked.

"I'm comfortable," Techna said, leaning her head back against Flora's shoulder.

"You're on top of me," Flora pointed out.

"And you're the one who put me there. Besides, if you wanted me to get up, you'd let me go," Techna said, gently patting the arm that was wrapped around her waist.

"I guess I would," Flora said, not bothering to move her arm.

"We're not going anywhere, are we?" Techna asked.

"Maybe later," Flora said. "Not right now."

"I guess that's that," Techna said.

"Do you want to watch a movie?" Techna asked as they headed back to their room from dinner.

"Sure," Flora said.

"Okay, Comedy, Romance, or Action, take your pick," Techna said, pushing open the door.

"Do I get sub-categories?" Flora asked, following Techna into the room.

"Nope!" Techna said, pulling out her current multi-function device. "I get to pick the sub-category."

"Okay," Flora said. "How about Romance?"

"Sounds good," Techna said, looking through her digital collection. "Let's see what I've got..."

"You know, we never did make it to Magix today," Flora said as the credits rolled.

"No we didn't, did we?" Techna said as she snuggled up to Flora under the blanket they'd stolen from their bed. "Maybe next time."

"Maybe," Flora said. "I'm kind of glad we didn't though."

"Yeah, today was nice," Techna said. "Too bad it has to end."

"I know," Flora said.

"It'd be nice if-" Techna cut herself off with a yawn, then continued. "Nice if things could always be like this."

"Okay, time for you to go to bed," Flora said. "How do you tire yourself out so thoroughly? You didn't do anything I didn't."

"It's the cold," Techna muttered. "Makes me sleepy."

"Well let's get you to bed where it's nice and warm," Flora said, getting to her feet.

"Are you going to pick me up?" Techna asked.

"If you want me to," Flora said.

"Please?" Techna said.

"Alright," Flora said with a smile, gently sliding her arms under Techna and lifting her off the couch. "Time for bed."

"Mmmm," Techna hummed, her head lolling slightly.

"You're already half asleep, aren't you?" Flora said as she placed Techna in her spot on the bed and tucked her in.

"Mmmm."

"Mmmm," Flora responded, climbing in on the other side of the bed. Even half asleep, Techna responded to her presence by cuddling up to her.

"Mmmm."

Today was a good day, Flora thought as she leaned into her girlfriend's warm embrace. *I don't ever want this to end. I never want to give this up. I want this to be the rest of my life.*

19.7

Techna pushed open the door to Eden hall. It had been a while since the loops had brought her here, but there were certainly worse places to be. She looked around the crowded bar, searching for a familiar face. Wait, was that- It was! Techna made her way over to where a scruffy-looking man was writing a journal.

"Doctor O," Techna said. "It's been a while."

Doctor Tommy Oliver looked up. "Techna?" He closed his journal. "I haven't seen you in ages! How have you been?"

"I'm doing well," Techna said, slipping into the seat across from her old mentor. "It really has been a while, hasn't it?"

"Ages," Tommy said. "Last time we met, you'd only just finished building your Zords."

"That can't be right," Techna said, then paused to think. "Is it? I was sure... no, that was... well, there was... Huh. I guess you're right, it really has been that long."

"Scary, isn't it?" Tommy said. "You're getting old."

"I don't think I'm getting *old* ," Techna said. "My loop ends before I'm even halfway through my twenties, unlike some people's loops."

"Ouch," Tommy said. "So, what have you been up to since then?"

"All sorts of things," Techna said. "Oh, I've made some improvements to my ranger gear!"

"Cool, what sort of improvements?" Tommy asked.

"Well, there's the Battlegear mode," Techna said. "Oh, and I did some work on the Technoblade. I'll have to show you some time."

"Sounds good," Tommy said. "Any new Zords?"

Techna sighed. "No. The original four were so much work that I'm kind of afraid to try building another."

"It is a lot of work," Tommy agreed. "Still, it's worth it once it's done. If you want, I could help you design one."

"Maybe I'll take you up on that," Techna said. "I'm not sure what kind of Zord it would be though..."

"I think we can figure something out," Tommy said. "If you want, we could start now."

"You know something?" Techna said. "I think I'd like that. Thanks, Doctor O."

"No problem," Tommy said. "Anything to help one of my kids."

19.8

"Flora, you have to come see this, it's amazing!" Roxy said, fluttering out from among the spirit vines. "There's this maze thing the spirits live in. I've never seen anything like it! You have to come see!"

"Alright, I'm coming," Flora said. She turned to Techna. "You mind if I leave you alone for a bit?"

"Go ahead," Techna said. "I want to talk to Asami about something."

Flora nodded, then took to the air to follow Roxy into the spirit vines.

"So, that's your new looper," Asami said, walking over. "Energetic little thing, isn't she?"

"Yes," Techna said. "Roxy's quite the handful."

"So, what did you want to talk to me about?" Asami asked.

"I'm working on a new Zord," Techna said. "It's still in the design stage, but I'd like you to take a look at it."

"Sounds like fun," Asami said. "I don't think I've ever helped design a Zord before. What kind of Zord is it?"

"A burrowing Zord," Techna said. "It's a gap in my Zords' coverage that I'd like to fill."

"It still needs to merge with your Megazord though, right?" Asami asked.

"I was thinking it would work like Battlegear," Techna said. "Adding weapons and armor, rather than replacing an integral part of the Megazord."

"That's probably simpler," Asami agreed. "Why don't you bring the design to my workshop tomorrow? We can go over it together and I'll let you know what I think."

"Thank you, I'll bring it over first thing in the morning," Techna said. She looked over at where Flora and Roxy were exploring the spirit vines. "It's a shame Korra's not Awake this loop."

"I know," Asami said. "She'd love Roxy. Probably say she's like the little sister she never had."

"She wouldn't be the first," Techna said. "Roxy brings that out in people. Even back in baseline Bloom all but adopted her."

"I've never met Bloom," Asami said.

"You haven't?" Techna asked. "Huh. I know she replaced Katara that one time. She still uses the Waterbending she got from that loop."

"And your Firebending?" Asami asked. "Do you still use it?"

"Not much," Techna admitted. "In fact, a few loops ago I tried to use it and I almost couldn't."

"Abilities fade if you don't practice them," Asami warned.

"Well, I didn't know that," Techna said defensively, then sighed. "I don't use it much, but when I discovered how weak it had gotten, I realized I was fonder of the ability than I had previously thought."

"Well you have it back now, don't you?" Asami said. "You know what you have to do to avoid losing it again, right?"

"I know," Techna said. "I don't think I'll ever use it to fight with, but I do like having it. I'll make sure to practice."

"Good," Asami nodded, then frowned. "Why *do* you keep looping in as a Firebender anyways?"

"Probably because I'm the Fairy of Technology," Techna said. "I suppose I might loop in as a Metalbender at some point, but Fire has more in common with my powers. Huh. I wonder if I can use lightning?"

"Probably," Asami said. "Do you want to find out?"

"Maybe later," Techna said. "I think Flora and Roxy are about to come back out."

"You two are still adorable together by the way," Asami said. "I still can't believe you're not a baseline couple."

"And I keep telling you we're not," Techna said. "You should meet my... ex, I guess? I'm not really sure what to call him, actually. Anyways, he started looping a little while back."

"That must have been awkward," Asami said.

"Very," Techna said bitterly. "It was... not a fun moment. Still, you should meet him at some point. He's almost as good at technology as I am."

"Sounds like a plan," Asami said. "It's always nice meeting a new engineer."

"He prefers the term 'Nerd'," Techna said.

"Alright then," Asami said. "And there they are." She pointed to where Flora and Roxy were emerging from the vines. "It's almost

time for dinner, how does Narook's sound?"

"Good," Techna said. "It's been a while since I've had Water Tribe food. It'll be good to try it again."

"Alright, go tell Flora and Roxy we're going, I'm going to pack up."

"Be right back," Techna said. "Thanks for doing all this for us, Asami."

"Hey, anything for a friend," Asami said with a smile. "Now get going, those noddles won't wait for us you know!"

19.9 (lord Martiya)

When Riven had accidentally called her for reinforcements (apparently he kept her number near Timmy's on his speedcall), Flora had expected many things. That Magix' famed crossdressing watchmaker was DIO Brando and was now furiously mauling the Black Circle Wizards was not one of them.

"Wh-what's happening here?!" she exclaimed when she realized it was actually happening.

"Oh, nothing!" he shouted back. "I just Awoke today, took in where I was, and just as I decided to take it easy this time these four come in, the one with the mohawk decides to rob me, and when I warn them to not even try it he says "And what can you do about it? We're immune to fairy magic"! And now you show up to interrupt my explanation!"

"That true?" she asked to Ogron, who managed to nod in spite of the beating he had just suffered.

Having to admit that DIO Brando was the innocent victim, for once… That was new to Flora. What to do?

19.10

"Do you think Roxy will be alright?" Musa asked.

"We've all had our turn beating these guys," Flora said. "She wanted to do it."

"Yeah, but do you have any idea what she's planning?" Musa said.

"No, but she said we should stick to baseline," Flora said. "So that's what we're going to do."

"Alright then," Musa said. "That's not that hard when it's just the two of us and Roxy Awake."

"True," Flora said. "Well, lets see what happens."

Roxy fled across the city, the Wizards of the Black Circle in hot pursuit. The Winx followed, skirmishing the wizards as Roxy slowly led them towards the ocean. Finally she reached the piers and ran out onto one of them.

"Fairies don't exist!" Roxy said to herself as she crouched on the end of a pier, holding her head in her hands. "They don't exist, they don't exist!"

"Oh, but fairies do exist," Ogron said, coming in for a landing behind the distraught girl. "And you're one of them."

Roxy turn and smiled, rising to her feet. "Oh, I know, I just needed you to follow me here."

"What?" Anagan demanded.

Roxy raised her hand, a white ring on her finger. Slowly, it started glowing.

"The White Circle!" Gantlos gasped.

"That's right," Roxy said. "I am Roxy, the Fairy of Animals! Creatures of the sky, creatures of the land, creatures of the sea, come to me, come to me!" The White Circle glowed with power.

"What's she doing?" Duman demanded.

The Fairy of the Animals called for help.

The animals answered.

Birds swarmed through the air, swooping down to form a massive cloud around the fairy. Rats, cats, dogs, and every other animal within a mile of Roxy's current position charged onto the pier, cutting off that route of escape. Behind Roxy, a pair of crocodiles surged out of the water to land on the pier next to her. Sharks circled beneath the pier and a killer whale burst out of the water a few hundred yards out to sea. In the chaos, Roxy took a moment to transform, her wings appearing behind her while the four wizards stared on in mingled horror and awe.

The Winx landed just outside the shell of hostile creatures and took a moment to stare.

"Did you know Roxy could do that?" Stella asked Bloom, yelling to make herself heard over the noise of the thousands of animals.

Bloom wordlessly shook her head.

"Should we do something?" Aisha asked, peering through the tornado of birds between them and the battle.

"I don't think so," Musa said. "I don't think we could even get in there right now."

"We can't just let her fight them by herself," Techna said, tapping away at her PDA.

"I don't think we have a choice," Flora said. "Right now there's nothing we can do unless Roxy lets us in. If she needs help, we'll be here."

"I really don't think she needs help..." Bloom said.

"Probably not," Musa agreed.

The cloud of birds finally parted, revealing four very battered and bedraggled wizards. Their clothes were ripped, there was bird poop in their hair, and they were very much unconscious. Just to be on the safe side, Roxy had also elected to restrain each of them by the simple expedient of having an anaconda that had escaped from an animal smuggling operation wrap itself around the four, effectively imprisoning them. The young fairy herself stood over the four wizards as she bid the majority of her helpers farewell. The animals turned around and headed back to where they had come from, flowing around the six Winx.

"Oh, hi!" Roxy said, waving at the six older girls. "It's safe, you can come out here."

The Winx shared a look. "So, who wants to give her the whole 'Fairies are Real' speech?" Musa asked.

"I already knew," Roxy said. "Thanks for playing along though. It got the Wizards right where I wanted them."

"You were using us?" Stella demanded.

"No!" Roxy said defensively. After a moment though, her shoulders slumped and she looked down at the ground. "Well... yes, I guess."

"Hmph," Stella said, turning her back on the young girl.

She wasn't the only one displeased. Techna looked disappointed, Aisha seemed angry, and Bloom... Bloom looked hurt.

"I... I'm sorry," Roxy said. "It... it seemed like a good idea at the time."

Flora walked over to the Earth fairy. "It's alright, we forgive you," the nature fairy said. "Just because they're not Awake doesn't mean they don't have feelings too," she added in a whisper.

"Yeah," Roxy whispered back. "I'll remember that next time."

"It's okay," Flora said in a normal voice. "We all make mistakes. Isn't that right, girls?"

The other Winx considered, then nodded in acceptance. "Just don't do it again," Stella said.

"I won't, I promise," Roxy said.

Flora nodded to herself, satisfied. Even she occasionally had problems remembering that non-loopers were just as real as she was, with their own emotions and personalities. Roxy had obviously forgotten. Her punishment for her thoughtlessness would be dealing with the distrust of the Winx until she could earn their forgiveness. Still, it was better that Roxy learn that lesson now than have it come back to haunt her later. Flora nodded again. Roxy would learn, just as Flora and all the previous loopers had before her.

Even after an eternity in Yggdrasil, there was always more to learn.

Author's Notes:

19.1: Stormy's halping!

19.2: Well, that's going to be a fun loop for the Winx.

19.3: Roxy's making friends.

19.4: ...Now I kind of want to write the Witch Kiko loop...

19.5: Yeah, I think Bloom's earned that beer.

19.6: Fear the almighty fluff!

19.7: New Zord!

19.8: More new Zord!

19.9: Well... That's a new one.

19.10: An important life lesson for loopers.

Keep an eye out for round twenty. Big things are about to happen. Big.

Chapter 20

20.1 (Awesomedude17)

Aisha recently decided to take up target shooting as a hobby when she got the chance. As far as most hobbies went, this one was definitely louder, but invigorating.

This trip, she dragged Flora along to act as a spotter for her when she went up to sniper rifles.

Aisha reached out for a rifle.

"No." Flora bluntly said.

"Why not?"

"The cocking handle's broken. It'll be uncomfortable using it."

"Oh, okay." Aisha reached for another gun."

"Scope's loosely fitted on that model."

Aisha reached for another.

"Recoil will give you a black eye."

"Flora, if you know so much about guns... Wait, I thought you hated them."

Flora averted her gaze.

"Shepard is pretty insistent on knowing about guns."

"These guns are from the 90's."

"Sometimes a Mass Effect weapon isn't always on hand."

Aisha narrowed her eyes.

"Wait, if you knew I hated them, why'd you bring me along."

"Remember the Krav Maga incident?"

"... Ooooh, you were Awake?"

"Yep."

"I hate you."

"Me too." The two laughed.

Flora had never seen this loop before. It was interesting, but rather odd. The city she was in, Alera Imperia, reminded her of ancient Rome from Earth. Of course, the ancient Romans of Earth never had elementals at their beck and call. It was interesting, learning how her abilities translated to the local system, and of course the world itself was fascinating.

Animals that were extinct in the hub still lived here on the continent of Carna. Humans were one of four notable races of Carna, the other three being the wolf-like Canim, the vaguely yeti-ish Icemen, and the tribal Marat. Even more remarkable, each of the four races had magic, but none of them had the same kind of magic. It wasn't just the difference between Witch and Fairy magic either, no, these were kinds of magic so distinct that they were hardly recognizable to a practitioner of one of the other systems.

Flora found it all fascinating. There was so much to learn, so much to see, so much to do, she hardly knew where to start. Well, actually, she did know where to start. She was enrolled at the Alera Imperia academy for some reason, which worked fine for Flora's purposes. She had a lot to learn about this loop before she was satisfied.

Of course there was always something to ruin any good thing. In this case, that something was a lordling named Kalarus Brencis Minoris. The man, boy really, did not seem to understand the concept of "no".

"Hello," he sneered at her as she made her way past the fountain. His usual cronies, Renzo and Varien were with him.

"Hello, Brencis," Flora said calmly, not breaking stride.

"What are you doing outside alone, girl?" Brencis asked, getting up from his seat. The beaded necklaces showing his mastery of Furycrafting jangled with their multitude of rank beads.

"Going to breakfast," Flora said. Unlike Brencis, she only wore one necklace sporting the green beads of Woodcrafting, though the necklace was full to bursting with beads. She was planning to add a necklace of blue to that soon, but for the time being she had focused on using her magic to replicate the peculiarities of Aleran Woodcrafting.

"Women shouldn't be allowed to roam freely unattended," Brencis said. "I think you need to be put in your place."

"I wouldn't try that, if I were you," Flora said, her patience wearing thin.

"And why not?" Brencis said. "It'll be your word against mine. And unlike you, I'm a Citizen."

"I still would not recommend it," Flora said.

"Good thing I don't care about your recommendations then," Brencis said, reaching for her robes.

Rather than attempt to evade his grasping hands, Flora called on the vampiric taint in her veins and grabbed him by the wrist. Her small, slender fingers could barely encircle his wrist, but she held him in a grip of iron.

"What in the- Crows take you, let go of me woman!" Brencis shouted at her as he tried to wrench free. Even calling on the strength of his Earthcrafting, he could not break her hold.

"I asked you not to touch me," Flora said politely. "And now I'm telling you not to touch me. Please listen this time." She released his hand.

"You're a Woodcrafter!" Brencis said in disbelieving rage. "Since when are you stronger than an Earthcrafter?"

Flora didn't deign to answer that, instead continuing on her journey to the dining hall. Brencis was a nuisance she'd been dealing with for most of a year now. Hopefully this time he would learn his lesson. She wasn't holding out any hope on that front though. He was simply one of the blemishes of this loop. If he knew who and what she really was, he wouldn't dare assault her like that. Sadly, Flora had come to the conclusion that she was alone in this loop. She'd sent out a Ping, but had received no response. Oh well, the loop was still interesting.

She turned into a narrow hallway that served as a shortcut to the dining hall. It was a shame she had no one to talk to. She was starting to get-

A knife was suddenly pressed against her throat and a voice came from behind her. "Who are you and where is Ehren?"

-Lonely. Well. So much for being alone.

"Can I see who is threatening me before I answer?" Flora said, careful to avoid cutting herself on the knife blade.

"No," the voice behind her said, though the knife eased away from her throat, giving her space to breathe. "Start talking."

"Do you mind if I ask you a question first?" Flora asked.

"I'm the one holding the knife," the voice said.

"Is this the first time you've experienced these events?" Flora asked.

"Yes," the voice said. "If I'd done this before I'd know who you were."

"I meant without me involved," Flora said. "Are you trapped in an endless loop of time, replaying a part of your life over and over again?"

The knife left her throat. "Turn around," the voice said.

Flora obeyed and took in a boy with dark hair and green eyes. He was wiry, but with a sense of strength that belied his slight, stunted frame. "You're the new student," Flora said. "Tavi, right?"

"Yes," Tavi said. "What do you know about these repeats?"

"A lot," Flora said. "I can tell you why you're the only one who remembers anything."

"I'm not the only one who remembers," Tavi said.

"You're not?" Flora asked.

"No," Tavi said. He looked around, then nodded to himself. "Come with me," he said. He pushed in a stone in the wall and a secret passage silently opened. He turned and started down the hidden stairs with Flora following.

"Aleran," the Marat woman with green eyes that perfectly matched Tavi's began. "Why have you brought this female here?"

"I'm guessing she's the other person who remembers?" Flora asked.

"Yes," Tavi said.

The three were hidden in an underground alcove, lit by a dim furylamp. The Marat was sitting on a stony ledge that was obviously intended as a bench. Tavi walked over to stand next to her, then gestured for Flora to take the seat opposite the other woman.

"I suppose I should start by introducing myself," Flora said. "My name is Flora Victoria."

"Gaius Tavarus Magnus," Tavi said. "Or Gaius Octavian if you prefer."

"You're in line for the throne," Flora said in sudden realization.

"Yes," Tavi said. "And if word of this leaves this room, I will know who let it slip."

"I understand," Flora said. She turned to the woman. "And you are?"

"My name is Kitai," the Marat said.

"And you're both experiencing the time loops," Flora said. "Which of you started first?"

The two local loopers shared a look. "There was no 'first'," Kitai said. "My Aleran and I experience this cycle together."

"Always?" Flora asked. "There's never a time where one of you doesn't remember?"

"No," Tavi said. "It's always the two of us."

"That's strange," Flora said. "One of you... unless... unless you're Co-Anchors, and maybe soulbound. That's the only thing I can come up with."

"Soulbound?" Kitai asked.

"Uh, it's complicated," Flora said. "But it basically means that you're connected on a spiritual level that makes sure you're always together."

"Of course we are," Kitai said. "He is my *challa.* "

"I don't know what that means," Flora admitted.

"How about a bargain then," Tavi cut in. "You explain to us what is happening and we will answer your questions. Fair?"

"Certainly," Flora said. "Why don't I go first? It all begins with a machine that is also a tree called Yggdrasil..."

"So the loops are nothing to be alarmed about," Tavi said. "Well, perhaps somewhat alarmed, but there is nothing we can do about it, correct?"

"That's it," Flora said. "The most we can do is protect our loops from damage, avoid causing crashes, and try not to cause problems for the Admins."

"And then we wait an eternity for our world to be fixed," Kitai said.

"Pretty much," Flora said. "There's not really much else we can do."

"I see," Kitai said. "Aleran, if you could answer her questions, I need to see the One."

"Stay safe," Tavi said, placing a quick kiss on her cheek.

"Aleran foolishness," Kitai said, her expression softening. "I am only going to the surface. There is no risk."

"Still, stay safe," Tavi said.

"Aleran foolishness," Kitai said with a soft smile. She rose and left.

"Who is the One?" Flora asked.

"The sun," Tavi said. "Sort of. It's complicated."

"That's alright, I'll find out later," Flora said. "You two seem close."

"I imagine we do," Tavi said. "She's my wife after all."

"Ah," Flora said. "And you're soulbound. I have to admit, I'm jealous of you for that."

"If we weren't soulbound..." Tavi began. "There would be a chance one of us would remember when the other did not?"

"Yes," Flora said. "It happens all the time to me, though my loop has lot of loopers at this point."

"So, I promised to answer your questions," Tavi said.

"Yeah, but I can wait," Flora said. "I don't even know all the questions I want to ask yet."

"Alright," Tavi said. "We should return to the academy before anyone starts wondering where we are."

"Probably for the best," Flora said. "What should I call you?"

"Call me Tavi," Tavi said. "All my friends do."

"Thank you," Flora said. "You and Kitai... You were married in your baseline?"

"Yes," Tavi said. "It took time, but we were."

"I see," Flora said.

"You look like you have something on your mind," Tavi said.

"It's nothing," Flora said, shaking her head. "Let's head back up. Thank you for trusting me."

"Just don't give me a reason to stop doing so and we'll get along just fine," Tavi said with a smile. "Let's go."

20.3

"Alright, new category," Musa said. "Favorite way you've crashed a loop."

"Do we have to?" Stella asked.

"Yes," Musa said.

"Most of us haven't crashed that many loops," Flora said. "The only loopers from around here who crash the loop on a regular basis are the Trix."

"Okay, then let's make it the *first* way you've crashed the loop," Musa said.

"Alright," Flora said. "I guess I should go first then. I crashed the loop by dying."

"You're the Anchor, that doesn't count," Musa said.

"It's the only way I've ever crashed the loop," Flora said. "I've come close, but I've never actually crashed the loop without dying."

"Goody two-shoes," Musa said, shaking her head. "My first crash was the time I made Valtor into a pop star. I'm not sure why that caused the loop to crash, but it did."

"I'm sorry, I don't remember that one," Flora said.

"You went on a brain bleach binge after it was over," Musa said.

"Ah, that makes sense," Flora said.

"I've never crashed our loop," Techna said. "I did crash an SAO loop though. Turns out the game was reality that particular loop. I tried to hack it and caused the game to crash, thereby crashing the loop. We came close to crashing the loop the first time we woke up the Great Dragon though."

"That's how I managed my first loop crash," Bloom said. "None of you were Awake for this one, and I never did find the Anchor. Anyways, for some reason Darkar, Valtor, and the Trix all teamed up and attacked during the second year. Worse, the Trix had gotten their hands on the Legendarium, and it was just... bad. Anyways, I summoned the Great Dragon to deal with the situation. She decided the best solution was to force the universe to reset, crashing the loop."

"So you didn't actually cause the loop crash," Flora said.

"Not directly, but it was my fault," Bloom said.

"I crashed the loop by trying to destroy the Andros-Omega portal," Aisha said. "I succeeded, but didn't realize how much energy would be released. Turns out it was enough to crash the loop."

"And what about you, Stella?" Bloom asked. "What was your first loop crash?"

"I don't want to talk about it," Stella said.

"Oh, come on," Musa said. "We've told you about ours, now it's your turn."

"I don't want to talk about it," Stella said.

"Why not?" Aisha asked. "It can't be that bad."

"Yes it can," Stella said.

"Seriously, just tell us," Musa said.

"Alright, *fine* ," Stella said. "You know how the loops occasionally switch our genders?"

"Yeah..." Bloom said. "Though somehow, I've never seen it happen to you when you're Awake."

"It happened once," Stella said. "I... didn't handle it well."

"You freaked out because you were a boy and your freakout crashed the loop?" Musa asked, incredulous.

"Yes," Stella said sulkily.

"You crashed a loop because you were turned into a boy?" Musa asked, starting to giggle.

"Didn't I just say that?" Stella said. "It's not that funny!"

"Yes it is!" Musa said, reduced to a giggling wreck.

"You have to admit, it is kind of amusing," Flora said. "Moving on. New category, favorite loop you've been to. Bloom, could you start us off?"

20.4 (Awesomedude17)

"Stella~!" Musa said in a sing-song tone.

"What is it Musa?"

"Behold, a Hub invention!" Musa held out a box.

"Bean Boozled?"

"Yep! And considering that you owe me for 50 Loops ago..." She said in a sly tone.

"Please tell me this is not horrible."

"Only if you're lucky." Musa smirked.

"Fine. Let's do it."

Bloom came across Musa repeated licking the cushion of the couch while Stella vomited in the bathroom.

"This was a terrible idea!" Musa yelled as she licked the cushion again.

"What?"

"Those!"

"...What, jelly beans? You girls are crazy." Bloom popped one into her mouth, and then turned green.

"Bloom?" Musa muttered.

"IT'S VOMIT! WHO MAKES VOMIT JELLY BEANS?!?!"

20.5

"I can't do it, Seras," Flora said, despair in her voice. "I just can't do it."

"Why not?" Seras said. "Flora, it's been millions of loops. I've been expecting this for a while. Why can't you do it?"

"I just can't," Flora said.

"Alright, let's take a step back," Seras said. "You want this."

"Yes," Flora said morosely.

"You've wanted to do this for a while," Seras continued.

"Yes," Flora said.

"You can't bring yourself to do it," Seras said.

"No," Flora said, her voice filled with gloom.

"What's stopping you?" Seras asked.

"I don't know," Flora said. "I just can't bring myself to do it."

"Is it because you think she'll say no?" Seras asked.

"No," Flora said.

"Is it because you don't think you're ready for this?" Seras asked.

"No," Flora said.

"Is it because you're afraid?" Seras asked.

"No," Flora said. "Well, sort of, but not really."

"Then what's stopping you?" Seras asked. "I promise, no matter what it is, I won't judge you."

"I just..." Flora paused, then let out a sigh. "I just can't- I'm not- I just- I feel like it would be... selfish of me."

Seras blinked. Blinked again. Blinked a third time. "Flora," Seras said. "You know I think of you as my sister, right?"

"Yes," Flora said. "You did give me your name after all."

"Good," Seras said. "Now, listen to your big sister for a moment. You are, without question, the least selfish person I have *ever* met. And I've met a lot of people. You almost never do anything for yourself. You are *pathologically* selfless."

"Is this... going somewhere?" Flora asked.

"Yes," Seras said. "You want this, right?"

"Yes," Flora said.

"How badly?" Seras asked.

"...More than anything in all of Yggdrasil," Flora said.

"Then Flora, for once in your life, *make the selfish choice* ," Seras said. "Just this once, do what you want to. Everything will be fine, you just have to take the first step."

"I..." Flora began.

"Flora," Seras said. "You've earned this. You've more than earned it. Just ask. Everything will turn out fine."

"...okay," Flora said. "I'll do it. Thank you, Seras."

"Hey, what are sisters for?" Seras asked. "Take care of yourself, Flora."

20.6 (lord Martiya)

Most people didn't know that, but Icy was a surprisingly good cook, especially with seafood. That was why Darcy had just asked her to cook a certain thing.

"No. This is disgusting, and you should be ashamed of even joking about it." she sentenced.

"Come on, we can clean him up with ease!" Darcy insisted.

"I didn't say 'unsanitary', I said disgusting! Look, I understand you hate him-"

"Understatement of the year!" Stormy shouted from her side of their room at Cloudtower.

"but Tritannus is still a sentient! I refuse to eat him! And don't even suggest we could get power from that, those rituals were abandoned for a reason."

"But-"

"No. I will not cook him for you. Especially not to eat him. And you won't eat him in any state, or feed him to anyone. And I'm going to keep an eye on you."

Furious, Darcy went to the corner where Tritannus was rejoicing, believing he'd get away with his life after the obviously crazy witch that broke in his prison kidnapped him to try and eat him. Then Darcy smiled.

"And you won't feed him to anything you plan to eat!" Icy shouted.

"RRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH!"

Darcy cast her superstrength spell and hurled Tritannus away.

"What do you think he did to piss Darcy off?" Sky asked his pals after seeing Tritannus land in Red Fountain's pile of dragon waste.

"Don't know, don't care, going to give him some mercy before Darcy calms down and comes to play." Riven replied as he prepared his phantoblade.

20.7 (lord Martiya)

It had looked like a normal Loop to Flora. One with everyone Awake (meaning that Rachel and someone else would likely pick up the hunt for the Dragon's Flame and likely hire a mercenary army when they failed, Tritannus was dead or worse by Darcy's hand, and neither Lucy nor Aisha wouldn't take part to Miss Magix), but still normal. Then Miss Magix had come, and this time the one with the number 13 was a blonde with an uncanny resemblance to Stella, only blue eyed and taller. Who was dodging the Trix' attempts at tripping her while using a dance she had adapted from Earthbending, and had just started juggling with the lamps Icy had tried to throw on her head.

"Not her… Not now…"

And knowing exactly what was going to happen, Flora started panicking. If only had she found out earlier…

Well, if nothing else the Awake Trix wouldn't use hellfire.

As expected, Stella had lost to the newcomer, and was ranting as usual when the newcomer showed up.

"Hi, Flora. How is my favourite rival doing?" she said. In Icy's presence. Flora slapped her own forehead, as she and the others took a step back and put up a barrier.

"Rival?!" the witch shouted, not amused in the least.

"Well, we a-"

"Outside, now. I'll teach you not to claim my job."

Perfect: Icy was in perfect Cloud Tower-style posturing to check if she was a worthy co-rival, that to anyone who had not been at that school looked remarkably like bullying. The one thing the blonde wouldn't stand.

"As you wish."

After the witch and the blonde left, Tecna asked her girlfriend: "I take that's the infamous Cornelia Hale?"

"Her in person." Flora admitted.

"You know her?" Darcy asked.

"Yes, I-"

Icy's torso suddenly emerged from the wall, with the witch shouting in pain with a rhythm making clear she was being spanked. Literally.

Then she was finally allowed to fall down, and Cornelia entered from a newly-formed hole in the wall-hole that closed itself immediately thereafter.

"As Flora was likely explaining, I am Cornelia Hale, from the W.I.T.C.H. Loops, that's an acronym by the way, there are enough similarities between our groups, our powers and even the reason I was the second choice as Anchor after the Heart that we've been JOKING about being rivals since she introduced me to the Loops, and I'm allergic to bullies." Cornelia said to the thoroughly humiliated witch. Then she looked at Bloom and continued: "By the way… I'm apparently replacing Diaspro, could you help me with some way for me to get out of her engagement without causing a diplomatic accident?"

"Sure."

As Cornelia and Bloom left to discuss that, Icy declared: "She's going down. Next time-

"She's SO going down." Stella said. Then noticed the looks from everyone but Flora: "What? She won Miss Magix, I can't let her get away with that!"

"Well, this went better than expected." Flora commented. "At least she didn't do too much collateral damage."

"Please, she only won because she caugth me by surprise, what can she do?!" Icy protested.

A few months had passed since the fateful pageant, Bloom and Cornelia were on their way to switch the engagement peacefully, Rachel and her accomplices had been expelled from Cloud Tower, and their mercenary army was charging at Red Fountain. Then a fissure opened and swallowed the entire force, courtesy of Cornelia.

"THAT is what she can do." Flora said to Icy. "And trust me, that's more merciful than what happens when she uses the plants."

"Alright, time to close up for today," Bloom said as the last few customers for the day left Love & Pet.

"Good," Stella said from her station. "Today was crazy!"

"You said it, Stel," Musa said. "I swear, half of Gardenia must have been in here today."

"I don't think there were that many," Techna said. "Still, today was busier than normal."

"Definitely," Bloom said. "I know you and Flora wanted to close early, sorry about that."

"It's not your fault," Flora said. "We still have plenty of time."

"Time for what?" Aisha asked.

"There's meteor shower tonight," Flora said. "Techna and I want to see it together."

"Ooh, that sounds like fun," Stella said.

"We can watch it from the roof," Bloom said. "Flora, Techna, if you want to go, we can handle your share of the cleanup."

"You're sure about that?" Flora asked. "We can stay and help if you need us to."

"We're fine," Musa said. "You two have a date to get to, now shoo."

"Thank you," Techna said. She and Flora headed out the door.

"Well girls, let's get to work," Bloom said.

"There I things I really like about being a looper," Techna said.

"Like being immortal?" Flora offered.

"Like never having to actually carry the picnic supplies," Techna said. She looked up and down the beach. "Where should we set up?"

"How about over there?" Flora suggested, pointing to a spot over by a tree, away from the main stretch of beach.

Techna nodded. "That looks good." The two loopers started towards their chosen spot. A few other people were on the beach to watch the coming show, but for the most part the place was deserted. Techna reached into her Pocket and pulled out an enormous beach towel that she laid out on the sand. Flora pulled a picnic basket from her own pocket and the two sat down on the towel to enjoy dinner.

"So when does the shower start?" Techna asked, putting her sandwich down.

"In half an hour, supposedly," Flora said. "Thank you for coming out to see it with me."

"I want to watch it with you," Techna said. "You don't need to thank me."

"Yes I do," Flora said quietly.

The two finished their meal in comfortable silence.

"There it is!" Techna said, pointing out to sea. The first of the falling stars streaked across the sky, leaving a trail of light as it fell.

"There it is," Flora said, laying her head on Techna's shoulder to watch the show.

To the universe, what the two women were watching was nothing special. The planet which had been dubbed Earth by its inhabitants

crossed paths with the tail of a periodic comet that said inhabitants had dubbed Swift-Tuttle, resulting in the phenomenon the planets inhabitants referred to as the Perseid meteor shower. Just ice and dirt burning itself out on the atmosphere a planet.

To those watching, it was like seeing it rain light. Lances of fire burned across the sky, providing a spectacle for those who had come out to watch. Bright stars were born, only to die seconds later as they burned out. In the background, the sea gently churned, the waves lapping at the shore as a gentle breeze drifted over it.

"It's beautiful," Techna said.

"It's supposed to last all night," Flora said.

"Mmmm," Techna said, resting the side of her face in Flora's hair. "We have work tomorrow morning."

"I know," Flora said.

"Let's watch for another hour, then go home," Techna said.

"Alright," Flora said. Behind her back, out of sight of Techna, she pulled a small object out of her Pocket.

The falling stars continued, destroying themselves in a display of Nature's grandeur.

"Time to go," Techna said, getting to her feet. Flora did the same, stepping off the blanket so Techna could roll it up and stow it in her pocket. "Ready to leave?" she asked.

"Not quite yet," Flora said. She took a deep breath, then started speaking. "Techna, I want to thank you. For everything. From the very first loop you were awake to right here and now, you've been a wonderful companion. The person I've looked to when I needed help and the person I went to when I wanted love." She hesitated, then

continued. "You are the most important person in my life, beyond anything I ever could have hoped for. I know-" she paused again, visibly gathering her courage. "I know we weren't 'meant for each other', not really, but we've made it work, and I love you even more for it." Flora dropped to one knee in the sand and pulled the small object out from behind her back. "I love you, and I want us to be together for the rest of our lives."

"Techna," Flora said, lifting the ring she was holding and offering it to the other woman. Techna's eyes widened. "Will you marry me?"

Author's Notes:

20.1: Not much to say on this one. The looping Winx are pretty much nothing like their baseline selves though.

20.2: Flora gives her first "Welcome to the Multiverse" Speech to someone who isn't from her loop!

20.3: Poor Stella...

20.4: Yes, those things are real. *Why* they're real, I don't know, but they are.

20.5: The most meaningfully vague loop I've ever written.

20.6: Not sure what Tritanus did, but Darcy's certainly holding a grudge...

20.7: Oh dear, this won't end well...

20.8: Yes. That happened. I said big things were coming, didn't I?

Meanwhile...

(Awesomedude17)

Aisha, Stella, Musa and Bloom were sitting alone while Flora and Techna were on another date.

Musa sighed loudly.

"What's up, Musa?" Bloom asked.

"It's just... I know we're immortal beings who are technically older than the multiverse, and because of that, we can take our time with everything, but seriously guys, Flora and Techna have been taking too long to go the next step."

"Marriage? Musa, you're just... kinda smart about this actually. It's has been a while since they've... you know."

Aisha, tapped her chin.

"How about a wager then?" She said with a coy smile.

"You're going to bet about whether or not our friends are getting married?" Stella replied with shock.

"No. It's inevitable. Therefore, I'm wagering that Flora's tired of just being Techna's girlfriend. I'm thinking Flora is going to be the one who proposes."

"What? Nooo... It's Techna." Musa countered.

"She has a point. Techna was the one who advanced their relationship." Bloom affirmed.

"But that doesn't sound so romantic, does it?" Stella replied. "I'm with Aisha on this."

"How much you're willing to bet?" Musa smugly asked.

"Losers must spend an entire party with Pinkie Pie."

"That doesn't sound so-" Aisha started.

"Chaos Goddess slash Sith Pinkie Pie, and all her daemons and Stormtroopers." Stella finished.

Everyone went silent.

"Deal!" Musa agreed.

"WHAT!" Bloom yelled.

"It's on!" Stella yelled.

"Stella, are you nuts?" Aisha asked.

"I guess I am."

Bloom and Aisha put their faces into their hands.

Chapter 21

"It was nice of the others to let us have today off as well," Flora said as she scrubbed scrambled egg from a pan in the sink of the kitchen part of the apartment over Love and Pet the six Winx shared.

"How long do you think it will take Fand to notice what happened?" Techna asked as she cleared the plates from their shared breakfast. She paused for a moment to once again stare at the ring that now graced her finger. A warm feeling rose in her chest as she looked at the small band of metal and stone.

"I'm surprised she hasn't already shown up," Flora said, taking the dishes and loading them into the dishwasher. She too took a moment to look at the ring on Techna's finger. On her *fiancée's* finger. She put the last dish in the machine, then turned and embraced the taller fairy. "It's been two days, I bet she'll show up soon."

"Probably," Techna said, returning the embrace. "But I'm fine if she waits for a bit too. You know what she's going to do when she gets here, right?"

"I know," Flora said. "She's not going to be happy."

"You got engaged?!" Fand's voice intruded on the couple's quiet conversation.

The two fairies looked up at the new arrival in the Winx's kitchen. "Hello Fand," Flora said. "Yes, we did."

"Flora proposed the night before last," Techna said, holding up her hand to display the ring.

"That's amazing!" Fand squealed with joy. "You two are such a perfect couple! I knew it! I knew it from the beginning! Oh, we need

to get started planning the wedding! I have so many ideas!"

"Fand," Flora said quietly.

"We're going to need invitations!" Fand said, not noticing Flora. "I'm thinking purple roses on the stationary!"

"Fand," Flora said, a bit louder.

"And then for the bouquet, I figure we're going to need a nice mix of flowers, something meaningful," Fand said. "I'll start researching immediately!"

"Fand," Flora said, firmly this time.

"Oh, and the venue!" Fand said. "We'll have to find a nice big place, maybe a big park wedding! And there can be-"

" *Fand,* " Flora said, cutting across the Admin's rambling.

Fand paused. "Yes, Flora?"

"We'd like to plan our own wedding," Techna said. "I know you like this sort of thing, but..."

"This is our wedding," Flora said. "We want to make it special for *us* . We don't want a big spectacle."

"You... you don't want a big wedding?" Fand asked, stunned.

"No," Techna said. "Just our closest friends and family from across the Loops."

"Oh," Fand said.

"Don't worry, you're invited too," Flora said. "It's just that..." She paused, grasping for words.

"You don't want to put too much focus on the wedding itself?" Fand suggested.

"That's it exactly," Techna said. "We both know it's a big step for us, but we want to make sure it doesn't change how we feel about each other."

"I... I see," Fand said. "Well... let me know if you change your mind, and... let me know when the wedding is."

"We will," Flora said. "And don't worry, we're not going to get married without letting you know. Just because we want a smaller private ceremony doesn't mean we don't want a nice one."

"Alright," Fand said with a smile. "Well, at least this gives me time to think of the perfect gift for you two! Oh, I need to go, see you two later!" She vanished in a flash of light.

"I'm almost afraid of what she'll get for us," Techna said.

"She means well," Flora said.

"She does," Techna agreed. "We should get an engagement ring for you too."

"Why?" Flora asked.

"Because I want to get you one," Techna said. "Unless you don't want one?"

"No," Flora said. "Of course I'd be happy to wear a ring. I'd love one."

"Then I guess I know what we're doing today," Techna said. "Let's finish cleaning up and then we can go."

"Sounds like a plan," Flora said with a smile.

21.2 (lord Martiya)

It had been just a few minutes since Flora had sent out the invitations, and Darcy teleported in from Cloudtower (they really liked to take over, even if they were following in Griffin's path when Awake).

"Why didn't you tell me earlier that you were about to propose?!" she screeched (in a tone that reminded Tecna of Kimberly's Rita Repulsa impression).

"Excuse me? Since when I need to tell you?" Flora asked, a bit peeved.

"Since my deranged sister decided you're her rival! Not even I know how she'll react to you getting married when she doesn't even have a boyfriend!"

"I'm standing right here, and I was just finished congratulating her."

Darcy looked at her right, and saw that Icy was just there. It took a few minutes for Darcy to make sure it wasn't someone in disguise.

"Wait... You aren't trying to compete with her on that?" Darcy asked, barely believing it was really Icy.

"Why should I? It's stupid, and even if it wasn't I've been after Valtor, dated Tritannus, and had the mobster princeling from those variants after me." Icy replied.

"Good point."

After that Icy left, leaving the incredibly embarrassed Darcy with Flora.

"Uh... Listen..."

"Don't worry, if Miele were like Icy I'd be hysteric too." Flora admitted.

"Speaking of Icy... Do you have already have someone for the catering?"

"No..."

"Well, I was thinking we could do that. She's very good, especially with seafood, and we know how to help her."

"Sounds like a good ide-Wait, seafood?"

"Yeah... And she refuses to let me eat Tritannus! Says it's disgusting AND unsanitary!"

"And... She won't prank us, will her?"

"And risk to ruin the perfection of her food? Diaspro will propose to Bloom before that happens!"

"Well, I'll have to ask Tecna first, but I think she'll agree."

21.3 (Awesomedude17)

Kotal Kahn received a pleasant surprise in the form of an old student.

"Stella, it has been a while."

"Yep!" Stella replied. "It has. I'm here to give you this." She took out a scroll, which Kotal Kahn took and read.

"A invitation to a wedding?"

"Flora and Techna. They've already invited most of the other Loopers this Branch."

Kotal Kahn gave a contemplative look.

"I'll consider. But if I come, I shall do so in the company of my closest allies. Syzoth. Ferra/Torr. Ermac. Erron Black. Is this request too much?"

"...It's mostly a Looper thing, but I'll see if I can give you some leeway."

"Then it is decided. If you allow my companions to join, then I'll come. Perhaps it'll even allow peace between Earthrealm and Outworld."

"Thank you, Emperor."

A green portal appeared next to them, where an old, drunk man stumbled out.

"B-Bloom told me that I wasn't invited to the wedding, so fuck you, I'm coming anyway to bitch a... about it." He drank from his flask.

"Rick, go home, you're drunk."

"Not drunk enough. Koa'taaaaaaal."

"Rick Sanchez... you know that you are not welcome here."

"I know." Rick said, getting touchy-feely with the Emperor. "I know." He whispered.

"...I'll just go invite the Grandmasters of the Lin Kuei and the Shirai Ryu now. Bye!"

21.4

"Flora!" Shepard said, walking across the Presidium to greet the fairy.

"Hello, Shepard," Flora said with a smile, rising from her bench to greet the man who had introduced her to the Loops.

"It's been a while," Shepard said. "How have you been?"

"I've been doing very well," Flora said. "In fact I-"

"Wait," Shepard said, catching sight of Flora's left hand. "Flora, what's that on your finger?"

Flora lifted her hand to let the ring on her finger catch the light. "I was about to tell you before you noticed," Flora said, smiling. "Techna and I are engaged."

Shepard blinked, then broke into a massive smile. "Good for you! When did this happen?"

"I proposed a few loops back," Flora said. "Techna decided to get me an engagement ring to wear as well."

"Wow," Shepard said. "I never would have called you being the one to propose. Congratulations, to both of you."

"Thank you," Flora said.

"So, I'm guessing you're working on wedding plans now?" Shepard asked.

"We've started," Flora said. "Right now we're working on getting the word out, and we'll have to ask Fand to pull some strings to get all the guests we want to be there."

"Of course," Shepard said. "I assume I'm invited?"

"Actually..." Flora hesitated, then forged on. "Shepard, can I ask a favor of you?"

"Sure, what is it?" Shepard said.

"You know how some things in the loops are never even close to set?" Flora asked.

"Like my gender, service record, and personal history?" Shepard suggested.

"Exactly," Flora said. She took a breath and let out a deep sigh. "My parents are like that. The same goes for Techna's parents too."

"Oh," Shepard said.

"Yeah," Flora said. "It's a bit hard to form attachments to them when they're never the same from loop to loop."

"I can see that," Shepard said. "I mean, my mother's only alive for one in every three loops, but at least she's fairly consistent."

"That's something," Flora said. "But that's not what I wanted to ask." Flora paused again, mustering up her courage. "Shepard, at my wedding, would you be willing to be the one to walk me down the aisle?"

Shepard blinked in surprise. "Flora, are you certain about this?"

"Yes," Flora said. "There's no one I'd rather have."

"Alright," Shepard said. "Alright. If this is what you want, I'll be honored to do it."

"Thank you," Flora said, embracing her fellow Anchor as sudden tears threatened to escape her control. "I can't tell you how much this means to me."

"I know," Shepard said, gently rubbing the girl's back. "I know." They broke apart after a moment as Flora brought herself back under control.

"Thank you," Flora said again.

"You are very welcome," Shepard said. "Now, gear up, we have a galaxy to save!"

"Yes, Sir!" Flora said.

21.5 (Awesomedude17)

"Pinkie Pie," Stormy started. "What is all of that?"

"Oh! These are Flora's and Techna's gifts for when they finally get married!"

"And what did you get them?"

"Well, I got them Allen wrenches, gerbil feeders, toilet seats, electric heaters, trash compactors, juice extractors, shower rods and water meters, walkie-talkies, copper wires, safety goggles, radial tires, BB pellets, rubber mallets, fans and dehumidifiers, picture hangers, paper cutters, waffle irons, window shutters, paint removers, window louvers, masking tape and plastic gutters, kitchen faucets, folding tables, weather stripping, jumper cables, hooks and tackle, grout and Spackle, power foggers, spoons and ladles, pesticides for fumigation, high-performance lubrication, metal roofing, waterproofing, multi-purpose insulation, air compressors, brass connectors, wrecking chisels, smoke detectors, tire gauges, hamster cages, thermostats and bug deflectors, trailer hitch demagnetizers, automatic circumcisers, tennis rackets, angle brackets, Duracells and Energizers, soffit panels, circuit breakers, vacuum cleaners, coffee makers, calculators, generators, matching salt and pepper shakers!"

"Where'd you get all of that?"

"At the hardware store, duuuuuh!"

Stormy banged her head against the wall.

21.6 (lord Martiya)

Bloom had just left a man with fourth grade burns on all his body. It was normally a bad thing to do, but as it was Phobos, a manipulative sociopath that couldn't be left alive but had to be killed more

completely than she could do to make it stick, it was the best thing to do. Now she only had to wait, and-

"Hi, Bloom." Will saluted her from behind. "How are you?"

"Fine, thanks." Bloom replied as she turned to face Will and her equally paranoid friends. At least this time they had snuck around invisible instead of throwing a stun grenade. "Did you know that Flora and Tecna are marrying?"

And with that Bloom was besieged by the girls, who were fantasyzing about going (Bloom wasn't even sure if they were invited), at least until Will pointed out something: "We can't go."

"WHAT?!"

"Look, Cornelia accidentally made an enemy of both Stella and Icy, and considering what I've heard of their temper they'll make a scene if they meet her again."

"Oh... Whoops?" Cornelia weakly said under the glares of her friends.

"At least we had already prepared the presents." Taranee said.

"And yes, we knew they'd get married." Hay Lin continued as a large package materialized from the Heart of Kandrakar's subspace pocket. And another came from Irma's.

"This is mine." she said. "Could you give it to them?"

Knowing Irma, Bloom was tempted to 'lose' it in the Patchamen's hideout.

21.7

"So, Techna," Asami said as she, Techna, and Korra sat down at Narook's. "I'd say it's been a while, but it really hasn't, has it?"

"No it hasn't," Techna said.

"No Flora?" Korra asked.

"Not right now," Techna said. "I think she's over in Mass Effect right now."

"Commander Shepard's loop?" Asami asked. "How do you know where she is?"

"Because I'm not here by accident," Techna said.

"You asked your Admin to send you here?" Asami asked.

"And she actually sent you?" Korra demanded.

"Yes," Techna said.

There was a moment of silence. "Why?" Asami asked.

"I need to ask you a favor, and I wanted to beat the gossip," Techna said.

"Gossip about what?" Korra asked.

"This," Techna said, putting her hand on the table. A ring sparkled in the dim light of the diner.

"Is that-?" Korra asked, peering at the band of metal.

"Yes," Techna said. "Flora proposed to me."

"You're getting married? Congratulations!" Asami said.

"Are we invited?" Korra asked.

"Of course you are," Techna said. "But, that's not why I'm here. Asami, I wanted to ask... Would you be my maid of honor?"

Asami blinked in surprise. "Me? You don't want one of your friends from your own loop?"

"No," Techna said. "I considered asking Musa, but... It just didn't feel right. I decided I want you."

"Well, I'm... I'm honored," Asami said. "Of course I'll do it."

"Thank you," Techna said. "This means a lot to me."

"You're welcome," Asami said. Their food arrived then, cutting off further conversation.

"Good night!" Techna said, waving her farewell to the locals.

"Good night, Techna," Korra said as Asami waved back. They watched Techna get on a motorcycle and drive off.

"So," Asami said. "Flora and Techna."

"Getting married," Korra said. "I never would have called it."

"Them getting married?" Asami asked.

"No, that I saw coming," Korra said. "I didn't see Flora being the one to propose."

"Really?" Asami said. "And here I thought she was the obvious one."

"I guess not," Korra said. "Must have been a surprise for Techna."

"Must have," Asami agreed. "Hey, you're not thinking about-"

"No!" Korra said. "Of course not."

"Good," Asami said. "Definitely not."

"Well, not now at least," Korra said.

"Definitely not now."

"Maybe someday though."

"Maybe."

"Probably."

"Eventually."

"When it's time."

"But not now."

"Definitely not now."

The two women stood in silence for a moment. "You wanna listen to some pro-bending matches on the radio at home?" Korra asked.

"Sure," Asami said. "Come on, let's go."

21.8 (Awesomedude17)

Stella looked over the clipboard and tilted her head.

"What are we going to do for refreshments?"

Flora and Techna shrugged.

"No idea." Flora said. "Maybe keep it varied."

"Probably for the best."

The Trix soon walked into the room, laughing repeatedly.

"What's up, girls?" Flora asked.

"Look outside." Icy chuckled.

Flora raised her eyebrow, then looked outside to see a metallic man repeatedly slipping on the ice, and faceplanting comically.

"Who's that?"

"We don't know. One moment, Darcy's thirsty, the next, this thing shows up, makes a face and sound, and we've got Pepsi in our hands. He then slipped on a water puddle from some training Stormy did, and then we got mischievous."

"Girls." Flora said, not amused.

"Relax, he's fine. Darkar got involved and blasted him, and he's no worse for wear."

"Darkar got involved? This late?" Techna said.

"A lot of Baseline changed, girls. Things are wonky now." Stella replied.

Pepsiman flew through through the window and landed on a table, which collapsed.

"Are you alright?"

Pepsiman gave a thumbs up, right before getting up, walking towards the door. Flora's potted plant then fell on his head, causing the others to wince.

"He doesn't seem to have good luck, does he?"

"Probably met Jinx, probably is just unlucky." Darcy shrugged.

"So... refreshments... soft drinks added?"

The others agreed.

21.9 (Awesomedude17)

Bloom crossed her arms as she placed her hands on the invisible barrier that surrounded her.

"I hate it when other fairy weaknesses apply to us." Bloom said as she looked down to the cinnamon circle surrounding them.

"At least he chose cinnamon instead of salt. That stuff burns like... well... you know." Aisha trailed off.

"We really need work-arounds to these loops. Flora?" Techna looked to see Flora already brandishing a vacuum.

"On it."

21.10 (lord Martiya)

Griffin could not believe to the plan of the Trix to disrupt Alfea's dance. She was expecting something like replacing the Specialists' presents with monsters, and yet they came up with something that not even the Ancestors would have thought. She only had one thing to tell her star pupils: "Film it."

The fairies of Alfea, led by their headmistress, went to their dancing hall, ready to host the Specialists from the dance. Faragonda personally opened the magnificent gates, stepped forward... And hurt her nose when hitting an invisible barrier, and again when the fairies immediately after her failed to stop in time.

The teachers tried to break in, but they failed. Nobody had any idea, until Bloom came forward, gave a look, and, remembering the traditional weaknesses of fairies (that didn't usually apply) said: "Someone bring a vacuum, they put a line of cinnamom on the thereshold."

Then a herd of pigs was teleported in the hall and ate everything, also devastating the place.

"GRIFFFFFFFFFFIIIIIIIIIIIIIN!"

As she heard Faragonda's scream from her office, Griffin knew that next year her students would be invited.

"I'll be there," Obi-wan Kenobi said, placing the invitation in his pocket. "Thank you for inviting me."

"Of course," Flora said. "Oh, and I have one for Anakin too." She pulled out a second envelope. "Do you think you could-"

"Flora Victoria!"

Flora jumped at the sudden noise, the envelope dropping from her hand as she whipped around to the source of the noise. "Seras!"

The blonde vampire moved through the crowded bar and pulled Flora into a hug. Obi-wan quietly grabbed the envelope and left, giving the two women some privacy. "So, do you want to tell me why I had to hear third hand that you actually followed my advice?" Seras demanded.

"I couldn't find you!" Flora said, trying to squirm out of the slightly-crushing embrace. "You know how the loops are!"

"That didn't stop you from getting to Commander Shepard, now did it?" Seras accused, letting Flora escape.

"That was-! Okay, I guess I could have asked Fand for help on this one too," Flora admitted.

"You could have," Seras agreed. "Or do you not care about your sister?"

"I do care!" Flora said. "It's just... Fand said doing that is hard, and I didn't want to ask for too much."

"You and your sense of selflessness," Seras said. "We've talked about that before, I know we have."

"We have," Flora said. "Thank you for that."

"Hey, what are big sisters for?" Seras said. "You have a little sister of your own, you should know this."

"My family is so strange," Flora said, shaking her head. "I have two sisters who aren't related to each other except through me."

"Yup!" Seras said. "Though I am looking forward to meeting the mini-Flora. I bet she's adorable."

"Just a bit," Flora said with a laugh. "I bet Miele will love you."

"Great, I always wanted a baby sister to go with my little one," Seras said.

Flora laughed at that. "It's good to see you again, Seras."

"It's good to see you too," Seras said. "Now, where's my invitation?"

3.12 (lord Martiya)

"Come again?" Timmy asked Stormy.

"I said, why don't we go to the wedding in a date, as friends?" Stormy repeated.

"But... Why? Yes, we're not mortal enemies anymore, but we're not exactly friends..."

"Look, we both know how boys are, even in the Loops. You go stag at the wedding of your ex-girlfriend, what do you think will happen when, not if, Icy makes a joke about your past relationship with one of the brides?" Timmy shuddered at the image. "Exactly. And I

respect you too much to allow it. Hence why this gorgeous lady is offering to be your date."

"Oh... Ok then. By the way... What's happening with them?" he asked as he pointed to the couch where Darcy and Musa were sleeping in a hug.

"Yesterday they decided to go as more than friends, and cuddled until they fell asleep. Already took a picture..."

21.13

Stella woke up and got out of bed, the sunlight just starting to peek through her window promising a good day. It was time to get ready for class. She started towards her bathroom to get ready for the day and promptly stepped on her shoe. It turned under her foot and she stumbled before toppling to the floor, smacking her head against the carpeted floor.

"Ow," Stella muttered, rubbing the point of impact. Hopefully it wouldn't swell to badly. Meanwhile, her rogue shoe had been kicked under her desk during her fall. Sighing, she crawled under her desk in search of the footwear. "Where are you?" she muttered. "Aha! There you are!" She grabbed the errant shoe and backed up a bit before standing up.

WHACK.

She had misjudged the distance and smacked the back of her head on the underside of the desk. She fell backwards, ending up in a tangled mess with the base of her chair. "Owww..." she moaned, slowly disentangling herself from the piece of furniture. She got to her feet and started towards the bathroom again, glaring at the shoe she was holding. For something so small, it was certainly proving to be a pain.

Glaring at the shoe as she was, she completely missed the fact that its twin was lurking in ambush. She stepped on her other shoe and found herself on the floor again with a few more bruises to add to her growing collection. She rolled over onto her back and groaned before sitting up just enough to glare at her shoes. Groaning in pain, she pushed herself to her feet. Today was not off to a good start.

She turned towards the bathroom again. And promptly tripped over the foot of her coat stand. For the third time in ten minutes she found herself painfully introduced to the floor. This time she lay there for a minute. "If someone is recording this, so help me..." she muttered. She got to her feet again. Maybe she should just call in sick today. Yeah, that was probably a good idea. She'd let Bloom know she wasn't well so the teachers wouldn't worry about where she was.

She carefully made her way over to her bed and grabbed her phone from the nightstand. She dialed and waited several moments for Bloom to pick up.

"Stella?" Bloom's voice came through the phone.

"Hey Bloom," Stella said. "I'm not feeling well, could you let the teachers know I'm not going to be in class today?"

"Stella?" Bloom asked, sounding confused.

"If you can't do it I'll ask one of the other Winx," Stella said.

"No," Bloom said. *"Stella... It's Saturday."*

Stella blinked for a moment. Then she promptly tried to suffocate herself in her pillow.

21.14

Flora and Techna sat together on their couch. In front of them lay a veritable armada of papers, completely covering their coffee table.

"Alright," Flora said. "Let's go over our choices."

"I think we should narrow our criteria down a bit first," Techna said. "I don't want to pick a venue only to find out it won't work."

"Alright," Flora said. "Where should we start?"

"Seating, I think," Techna said.

"Seating?" Flora asked.

"It's a place to start," Techna said. "We need to make sure there's enough space for everyone we invited, but at the same time, I'd like to have a small enough place that it doesn't feel too big."

"Alright," Flora said. "That makes sense, and I definitely agree about a place feeling too big."

"I have the full list of the invitees," Techna said, pulling up an app on her current device. She checked a few things, then started sorting through the papers. The ones that did not pass muster were placed off to the side. "Any suggestions from you?"

"Hmmm..." Flora hummed. "Well, I think a high ceiling is a must, given who we're having officiate."

Techna quirked an eyebrow. "I suppose it is," she said. She started sorting again. This time some were discarded, and the remainder were sorted into two piles. "These ones definitely have a good bit of ceiling clearance," Techna said, pointing to the first pile. "I'm not sure about the others, though."

"We'll have to check them out later," Flora said. "Anything else?"

"A few other things," Techna said. "I don't think we'll be able to figure them out without actually visiting the venues first, though. Do you have any preferences at this point?"

Flora considered for a moment before answering. "I don't really want it to just be some random place," she said. "I want it to be somewhere important to us."

"That's a good idea," Techna said. She looked at the papers in front of them before just pulling out her mobile again. "That changes the list a lot."

"I know," Flora said. "Sorry."

"It's fine," Techna said. "Let's go over what fits that description."

"Alfea," Flora said.

Techna nodded and added it as the first entry in her new list. "There are some places on Zenith and Linphea that might work."

Flora shook her head. "I haven't lived on Linphea in a very long time, and you barely even visit Zenith."

"Well it's cold there," Techna said. "I guess both of those are off the list?"

"I think so," Flora said.

"Okay then," Techna said. "There's the other Magic Schools."

"Red Fountain maybe," Flora said. "I'm not having my wedding at Cloud Tower though."

"Mmm," Techna hummed. "Yeah, bad idea."

"Why not somewhere on Earth?" Flora asked. "Ever since the expansion we spend more than half of each loop living there anyways."

"That's a good idea," Techna said. "There's a number of places in Gardenia we could use."

"Let's not use Love & Pet," Flora said with a laugh.

"I think we can agree on that," Techna said. "I think we can also skip the Fruity Music Bar."

"Wrong atmosphere," Flora agreed.

"We could do either a beach or a park wedding," Techna suggested.

"We could," Flora agreed. "We could also use Tir Na Nog if we wanted."

"True," Techna said. "It's certainly big enough."

"I suppose there's also the castle on Domino," Flora said.

"Also an option," Techna said. The two fairies were silent for a moment. "I think that's it then," Techna said, gathering up all the papers on the coffee table, shaking her head. What had she been thinking, printing all these out? "We have our list of possible venues."

"Yeah," Flora said. "That was really weird."

"Weird?" Techna asked. "How so?"

"It was weird because it was so... normal," Flora said. "I mean it was... It wasn't..."

"It didn't involve time travel, magic, or an evil fiend trying to take over the Magic Dimension?" Techna offered.

"No," Flora said. "Well, yes, but no. It's just, I mean, I have vague memories from a long time ago, like before you were looping, where I... imagined doing this with someone. I mean, I didn't have any real plans, but I thought about it once or twice."

"And that makes it weird?" Techna asked.

"Well, I've already done just about everything I ever wanted to do back in baseline," Flora said. "This is the only thing left. And now it's happening."

"Probably not quite how you imagined it though," Techna said.

"Close enough," Flora said.

"If you say so," Techna said. "I guess we should move on to some of the other details, then?"

"Let's," Flora said.

Author's Notes:

21.1: Sorry, Fand. On the other hand, d'awww.

21.2: Uh... okay? Dunno why you'd want to eat Tritannus in the first place, but whatever.

21.3: Invitations!

21.4: One of the more bittersweet aspects of the Loops.

21.5: I... *think* Techna can find something to do with all that? Maybe?

21.6: Methinks we may be seeing a bit more of W.I.T.C.H. in the future...

21.7: Someday maybe?

21.8: Bet you didn't know Pepsi has their own superhero mascot. I sure didn't.

21.9: Winx fairies really don't have that much in common with the Fae of legend. Usually.

21.10: I said *usually* .

21.11: Loops family weirdness!

21.12: I'm pretty sure this is entirely platonic. I think. I didn't write this one.

21.13: We all have those days. However, when a writer has one of those days, they have these handy little puppets they can take it out on. Sorry Stellla.

21.14: Planning! Whee!

Wedding in the Winx

The Wedding of Flora and Techna

(Firehawk242, lord Martiya, Awesomedude17, Evilhumour)

"Flora!" a blonde vampire said, stepping off the teleport pad of the Inter-Realm Travel station.

"Seras," Flora said, hurrying over to embrace her adoptive sister. "It's good to see you again."

"You too, little sister," Seras said, returning the hug of the taller woman.

"The wedding's not for a few more more months," Flora said, pulling back a bit. "So we have plenty of time to show you around."

"That's what you think," Seras said with a smile as she released the fairy. "Now where is-?"

"Hello," the pink haired fairy behind Flora said, holding out her hand. "I'm Techna."

"I guessed as much," Seras said, taking the offered hand. "Flora's told me so much about you that it feels like I already know you. It's nice to finally meet you."

"Likewise," Techna said nervously. "Is there anything we can do for you? We have a room ready for you in our house, but if you want we can-"

"You can relax and let me get to know my future sister-in-law," Seras said with a laugh. "Seriously, you're fine, I don't bite. Well, actually, I do, but I won't."

Flora giggled. "We should probably get out of the station," she said. "We're about to be blocking traffic."

"Good idea," Seras said.

"So am I the first to arrive?" Seras asked as the three women walked through the streets of Magix.

"No," Flora said. "Asami and Korra arrived the day before yesterday, and of course our friends from this loop were already here."

"Asami and Korra?" Seras asked.

"My Maid of Honor and her girlfriend," Techna supplied.

"Oh, my opposite number is here?" Seras asked. "Excellent! I'll have to talk to her about getting everything set up."

"She and Korra are staying in the city," Flora said. "We were going to meet them for lunch tomorrow, if you'd like to come."

"Definitely," Seras said. "But first, I want to see your home!"

"So Korra and I are walking down the street and the Equalist agitator is giving his schpiel," Asami said, "railing on and on about the oppression of non-benders at the hands of the bending elite, not realizing the Avatar's less than thirty feet from him."

"That's great," Seras said with a laugh. "How'd that work out for him?"

"I may have broken his table in baseline," Korra said sheepishly.

"Yes you did," Asami said. "Anyways, Korra and I are trying to figure out who our Anchor is for the loop because Jinora wasn't Awake. So we're walking down the street and we see a broken down Satomobile pulled over to the side of the road, smoke coming out of

it and everything, and there's this really tall girl with her head buried in the engine while the owner's standing there wringing his hands."

"And you came over and offered to help fix the thing," Flora said.

"Of course I did," Asami said. "I design the things, I know how to fix them. So I go over and help the girl, who I didn't realize was a looper, fix the car."

"It was my first time working with the specific technology," Techna said. "If you'd given me another ten minutes I'd have fixed it myself."

"Not without the right part," Asami said. "So Techna and I finish up with the car and we send the owner on his way. At this point we're both covered in oil and Techna's hair is so clogged with soot that I can't tell what color it is."

"Okay, I was wondering about that," Seras said. "Pink's not exactly a normal hair color." She paused for a moment, then asked the obvious question. "It's not a normal hair color in your world, right?"

"No," Korra said. "It's not."

"Oh, good," Seras said.

"Anyways," Asami continued, "We're standing there and we're both a mess."

"Meanwhile Korra and I were watching and introducing ourselves to each other," Flora supplied.

"And commiserating about our tech crazy girlfriends," Korra said.

"You were 'commiserating'?" Asami asked.

"I can use a dictionary too," Korra said defensively.

"That's adorable," Seras said with a laugh. "So you and Techna are a mess and neither pair knows the other is looping, right?"

"Right," Asami said. "However, since Korra's nice, she offered to get Techna and me clean."

"Bending is fun," Korra said with a smirk.

"And I accepted," Techna said.

"Next thing I know, the girl next to me has pink hair," Asami said. "And given how thorough Korra's cleaning is, it's obviously not there by accident."

"And then you both had a minor freakout where you thought I was the Anchor," Techna said. "Not realizing that the real Anchor was the one who was cracking up at the two of you."

"Yeah, well," Korra said. "Now I know what it must have been like for that Equalist."

"Or something," Asami said. "So Seras, how did you meet Flora?"

"It's not much of a story," Seras said. "I heard she went through my loop, that the vampire powers had stuck, and that she was new to the loops, so I went and found her during an Eden Hall loop."

"And then she unilaterally declared herself my new sister," Flora said.

"I don't remember you complaining," Seras said with a grin.

"I wasn't even twenty thousand loops old at that point," Flora said. "I was a young looper who had recently had her first encounter with an MLE and was suddenly faced with a perky, scary, much older woman who wanted to buy me a drink. What was I supposed to do?"

"Grin and bear it?" Korra suggested.

"You would say that," Asami said, swatting the Avatar's arm. "Speaking of such things, Techna, do you or do you not want to have a bachelorette party?"

"I-! I don't know!" Techna squeaked. "Maybe? I don't know!"

Asami rolled her eyes. "Techna, this is the seventh time I've asked. Make a decision."

"I don't know!" Techna said. "Can I get back to you later?"

"Fine," Asami sighed. "But seriously, make a decision."

"I will," Techna promised.

"What about you, Flora?" Seras asked. "Bachelorette party for you?"

Flora froze as Seras put her on the spot. "I… I… I don't know either?"

"You two have been planning this for loops," Seras said. "And your loops last seven years. We are now three months away from the event, and neither of you know what you want."

"Maybe?" Techna said nervously.

Asami and Seras shared a look.

"Right," Asami said. "Korra, sorry, but Seras and I have a lot of work to do if this wedding is going to actually happen on time."

"You're going into your project mode, aren't you?" Korra asked.

"I'm 'fraid so, dear," Asami said.

"It's alright," Korra said. "I knew what I was getting into when we started going out. Just make it work." Korra got to her feet. "Come on, let's leave them to it," she said to Flora and Techna. She nodded to Seras. "Good luck." Korra left, dragging the couple-to-be behind her.

"Should I be worried?" Seras asked.

"Maybe," Asami said, shaking her head. "I like both of them, but they're so indecisive. Did you know they haven't even decided on a venue yet?"

"No," Seras said. "Shouldn't they have figured that out ages ago?"

"Yes," Asami said. "But they're still undecided between Alfea, Tir Nan Og, and a possible park wedding on Earth."

"Wow," Seras said.

"I know," Asami said. "Ask either of them to save the world and they'll have a solution for you in a matter of hours. Ask either of them to make a decision about their personal life and you'll still be waiting a hundred loops later. It's a miracle either of them ever got around to proposing."

"You don't want to know how hard I had to push Flora to get her to actually do it," Seras said.

"I probably don't," Asami sighed. "Alright, if we want this to work, we're going to have to take over the planning ourselves. Do you have any thoughts on the venue issue?"

"No, but I get the feeling you do," Seras said.

"I'm an engineer," Asami said. "And an architect, and an inventor, and a whole bunch of other things as well. More importantly, I'm their friend. If I have to build them the proper venue by hand, then that's what I'll do."

"You're thinking about building them a place to have a wedding?" Seras asked.

"Yes," Asami said, reaching into her Pocket and pulling out a sheaf of paper. "Look at this."

"...Wow. That just might work," Seras said, shaking her head. "Can you get it up in time?"

"Watch me."

"So, how are going to handle the guests?" Roxy asked.

"Well, we'll do it on a case by case basis. For people like Shepard and his... or is it her... their crew, they're fine going off on their own. For people like Rick Sanchez..." Musa mused.

"Don't mention him again." Bloom grumbled.

"Can't."

"He wasn't even invited, anyway. Why's he coming?"

"You're right, he invited himself." Stella explained. "And considering his Baseline achievements, it's best not to get in his way, and serve lots of booze."

"Who's going to watch these problem guests anyhow?" Aisha asked.

"I can watch them."

The girls and Timmy turned towards Roxy.

"You? You sure?" Icy asked.

"Trust me." Roxy said as she cracked her knuckles and cracked her neck. "They'll underestimate me. They always do."

Aisha scratched her chin.

"How about we put that to the test. Give me a moment." Aisha took out her phone. "Bloom, Musa, by the way, I think it's time to collect on your debt."

Bloom and Musa stiffened up.

"What?" Stormy was confused.

"Yeah, what?" Timmy asked.

"HELLOOOOOOOOOO!"

"Hello Pinkie Pie. We need a 'special' party for Bloom and Musa."

"How special?"

"Really Special."

"...Give me five minutes, I'll make a great entrance."

"Thank yoooou~." Aisha hung up. "Roxy, keep Bloom and Musa here. Let's go."

Wearing the sweetest smile imaginable, Darcy blocked their path.

"Aisha, would you kindly explain what's happening to my date?" she asked in a sweet tone that fooled no one. For a moment, Musa and Bloom hoped they would get out of it.

"They lost a bet, why?"

"Just checking if there was a valid reason." Darcy answered with a normal tone, crushing their hopes. "Musa, Bloom, LET'S PARTY!"

"Before you ask, today she isn't going to lose sight of Musa." Icy said. "We placed hidden cameras all around for a reason, you know…"

"Thank you girls, but I'm telling you, this party is-"

Aisha then got an elbow from Stella. Aisha then noticed the coy smile she had, and smiled back.

"Going to be a bit much for you, if you think you can handle it."

"Of course we can." Darcy said. "You obviously got stuff to do, so go."

Most of the group left, leaving behind Roxy, Bloom, Musa and the Trix.

"So, when's the party starting?"

"Right now..."

The room went silent.

"What was that?"

"Did we forget to mention that Pinkie Pie's parties if they're really special are... more on the Chaotic side." Bloom words soon brought fear into the hearts of the Trix.

A rip in reality opened, and in came Pinkiel, Chaos Goddess of Parties, and all her daemons. Said Goddess also had an entire team of Chaos infected Stormtroopers.

"It's party time!"

Roxy took out a vial of Brain Bleach and sighed.

"Bring it on." She downed the drink.

(Several hours later)

Twilight Sparkle, Leman Russ and Albus Dumbledore wearily walked towards the unexpected Chaos Outbreak. After only a few seconds, Leman immediately recognized the culprit.

"Pinkie Pie, of all ponies, mother." Leman sighed. "I'll go get Nyx."

"No, we won't." Twilight told her son-in-law. "I can handle this."

"I'll prepare the Obliviates for the poor victims." Dumbledore said, taking out his wand.

Three women ran towards them.

"HELP US, SHE'S CRAZY!" Icy screamed.

"PLEASE, TALK SOME SENSE INTO HER!" Darcy added.

"I WANT MY MOMMY!" Stormy went into a fetal pose and began to suck her thumb.

"And this is why we didn't let Pinkie plan the one billionth Loop anniversary for Slaanesh and Naoki. This happens." Leman said, gesturing to the traumatized Trix.

"Albus, if you will." Twilight said as she walked towards the Chaos party while Dumbledore began to Obliviate the memories involving Pinkiel.

Twilight soon entered the building where Roxy was completely sloshed, Bloom and Musa were catatonic, and Pinkie was baking gluten-free cupcakes.

"Pinkie, what did I say about all of this?"

"Sorry Twilight, but Bloom and Musa made a bet, a bet that turned into a Pinkie Promise, and we all know what happens when you break a Pinkie Promise to a Looping me, not that it mattered because this party was part of the bet!" Pinkie then called out to one of the daemons in some unspeakable tongue. "-, stop doing that to Clive. It's weird. And Clive, what have I told you about smoking indoors?"

Twilight sighed. Bless Pinkie, but sometimes, things go too far for her.

"At least let me have Dumbledore Obliviate them."

"Yeah, let them. It's either that, or being drunk." Roxy spoke up.

"And why are you drunk, Roxy?"

"Oh hey, that rhymes!" Pinkie exclaimed.

"The bubbles are hurting my eyes."

Twilight put on an annoyed look.

"Okay Twilight, I can see you're annoyed... party's over guys. Go home."

"AAAAWWWWW!"

"No buts, time to go."

Twilight put on a smile.

(A week later)

Stella looked at her wristwatch and sighed.

"Where are they?"

"Where are who?" One of the others asked.

"I got word that Kotal Kahn had managed to usurp Mileena again and was preparing to fix relations between all the realms threatened by Shao Kahn. He said that this wedding might be a good start, and that he'd be appearing soon."

"Well give him time. It's not like he's gonna come months before the wedding." Aisha reasoned.

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

"Indeed you are." A voice called out.

"Ah, Raiden. It's good to see you." Stella said to the Thunder God.

"As is for me. When I received word of Flora's engagement, I knew that I would attend."

"So, how'd you meet Flora?"

"Looped into Shang Tsung's tournament. Since she was a Hellsing vampire, she made quick work, though she relented to Liu Kang once she realized that Earthrealm's defeat would bring about ruin."

"Not that it mattered in the long run," Johnny Cage appeared around the corner. "Shao Kahn got into a hissy fit not long after, tried to kill Raiden here, and guess who he pissed off?"

"Uh, who?" Musa asked.

Raiden continued. "The Elder Gods, who found Shao Kahn in violation of the bounds of Mortal Kombat. His death was swift, and Outworld without its ruler."

"Until, good ol' butterface got on the throne, but Kotal Kahn took exception to that, you see." Johnny added.

"In short, our major threats are mostly dealt with."

"What about Shinnok?" Stella asked with worry.

"We've got that covered." Johnny waved off the fae.

"Hanzo, did you really have to do this?" Kuai Liang asked as he watched Quan Chi's burnt corpse hit the floor.

"You do realize that I always get dibs on Quan Chi while you handle Shinnok, right?"

"Hanzo and Liang are easy to convince when it comes to the Netherrealm."

"Well, if you say so," Stella said.

"We know so." Raiden said. "But now, we wait. This wedding is to be outdoors?"

"I don't know," Stella said. "Asami's building… I'm not sure what. But it looks interesting!"

"So," Asami said. "Bachelorette parties. MAKE. A. DECISION."

"Um…" Flora said.

"Er…" Techna said.

"Right," Asami said, shaking her head. "I guess that's a no. This should not have been nearly this hard."

"Sorry…" Flora said.

"Are you ready?" Commander Shepard asked.

Flora swallowed back her nerves and nodded, her veil bobbing in time with the elegant braid of hair running down her back. "I'm ready," she said, looking at the building the wedding was occurring in.

Asami had taken it upon herself to build the perfect venue for the wedding, but she'd insisted that the brides were not to see the site until the day of the event. That day was today. Flora stared at the building's front entrance, which looked like it belonged on an elven cathedral. Twisting designs formed a massive but somehow still delicate doorway set into a wall of beautifully carved grey stone. Ornate statues of animals and figures from myth stood in alcoves recessed into the wall, breaking up the smooth surface with their own pattern. The doors themselves were massive flawless oak,

carved with the likeness of an Enchantix fairy's wings. It was beautiful.

Flora stared at the building. Her future waited for her behind those doors. Techna was waiting for her.

She resolutely lifted one foot and placed it in front of the other, walking into the unknown ahead of her.

Techna stood at the dais, waiting nervously.

"Relax," Asami said from beside her. "Everything's going to be just fine."

Techna gave a jerky nod, her voice refusing to work.

"I'm serious," Asami said. "Seras and I made sure everything was in place. You don't have to worry, just enjoy your special day, alright?"

Techna nodded again, then cast her eyes out across the hall again. Asami had done amazing work building this place. It was almost too much. Fortunately Asami had made sure they never got a chance to object by keeping them from seeing it. The little selfish voice in the back of Techna's mind was glad she did.

The fae cathedral theme from the outside continued inside the building. The main doors opened into the grand central sanctuary. Ornate pillars marched down the edges of the massive room, rising into the air before splitting into filigree strands that wove together to form a vaulted roof. Tiny panels of stained glass in the ceiling created a dappled weave of colors across the central aisle. Tall translucent windows filled the gaps between the pillars, letting in the warm yellow early summer light. A carpet so green it was impossible to tell it wasn't grass covered the floor. Rows of ornate benches marched down the sanctuary towards the dais. Techna had a hard time finding an empty seat among the crowd of friends and family here assembled.

Techna smiled, pushing her nerves down again. The crowd assembled was certainly bigger than she and Flora had originally imagined, but it was full of people she knew and loved, each in their own way.

She swept her eyes across to the other side of the dais where her future sister-in-law stood. Seras smiled at the fairy, a gentle twinkle in her eye. Techna smiled back.

"Peace, child," a voice of gentle fire whispered in her head. **"This is your day of joy. All will be well."**

Techna nodded. Then the doors opened and a pair of figures stepped through. And suddenly Techna only had eyes for the single most beautiful person in the world.

Flora stepped through the doors to the beginning of her new life, the man who had introduced her to the loops at her side. Music started playing from an unseen source as the crowd turned in their seats to look at her. Ahead of her was the future. Her future.

The aisle led down the center of the sanctuary, sloping ever so slightly downwards. Not enough to be an issue, but just enough to make it easier for everyone to get a view of the dais. At the end of the seating the room expanded outwards into an enormous round area. Carefully laid stones formed a mosaic in rings of color. Guardian figures decorated the walls, casting their blessing upon the space. A short stone step down separated the seating area from the circle. In the middle of the circle, the dais rose from the ground, six steps leading up from the ground to the top. A carved stone altar stood atop the dais, basking in the muted green and yellow glow from the massive stained glass skylight above it.

And in front of the altar stood the most beautiful person in the world.

Flora slowly walked down the aisle to her new life.

Shepard smiled as he stepped back to let his protégé take the last few steps to join her beloved, handing the bouquet she carried to Seras. She'd come so far since he'd met her all those loops ago on Eden Prime. He peeled off, nodding to Doctor Tommy Oliver as he took the seat reserved for him.

The two women stood face to face, looking at each other through their veils. A stillness filled the room as the music moved towards its conclusion.

The final note rang out and seemed to hang in the air, humming like a bell as it slowly faded. Silence fell, and then a spiral of flames came into being behind the altar. The fire slowly rose into the air, towering over the wedding party and burning with all the colors of the rainbow as it formed a gently spinning tornado of radiance.

A soft roar came from the column of flame and it dispersed, revealing the Great Dragon of the Magic Dimension. Her shimmering coils caught the light, scattering it across the crowd as she shifted her head to be level with the two women.

"Gathered friends, dearly beloved," The Great Dragon said. **"We are here today to celebrate the union of two souls in love and commitment." She swept her gaze across the gathered crowd. "The union of two who have been chosen to protect their world against all harm, and have found shelter in each other. It is with great joy that they welcome you to share in this moment with them, as you are all here because you have become a part of their lives. And now, as they begin the newest stage of their lives, they find it only fitting that you are gathered here to watch their two lives become one.**

"Flora and Techna would like to express their love and gratitude to those who have agreed to stand as their parents for this ceremony. The loss of one's parents to calamity is tragic, and to have those willing to stand in their place is one of the greatest acts of kindness we are capable of.

"Flora would like to thank Commander Shepard for his guidance, his friendship, and his generosity. She will always be a member of Shepard's crew.

"Techna would like to thank Doctor Thomas Oliver for his care, his teaching, and his friendship. She would not be the woman she is today without him.

"The two would also like to thank their friends from this world. Bloom, Stella, Musa, Aisha, Roxy, Darcy, Icy, Stormy, and Timmy, you have all played a role in shaping these two women, and they are forever grateful.

"And to those gathered here to observe the wedding, they give thanks. And so they present themselves to be married today in the presence of all those whom they love most."

The Great Dragon bowed her head, her eyes closing briefly as a hint of magic surged through the air. The veils obscuring the brides' features dissolved into strands of colored mist and vanished, leaving the two women staring at each other, pure emotion filling the tiny space between them.

The Great Dragon pulled back slightly and the two fairies placed their hands together between them, Techna's hands held in the warm embrace of Flora's grasp.

"Flora and Techna are proof that love knows no boundaries, no limits, and no fate," The Great Dragon said. **"They were never destined for each other. Fate demanded they each love another, and both circumstance and feelings conspired against them. To anyone who witnessed their beginning, that they would now stand at the threshold of marriage together would have been unthinkable.**

"But love finds a way. Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is gentle. Love is strong. Love is unyielding. And love is victorious today, for, despite all that opposed them, these two have come

together with a love that has beaten all that would deny it. Even destiny, such an immutable thing, has yielded before them. And now, they make their own destiny.

"Techna, Flora loves you for all that you you are. You are her anchor at sea, her shelter in a storm, and her light in the dark. You are the one she will always turn to for help, and the one who will always provide comfort when it is needed. She loves your drive and passion to continue learning and growing, always moving beyond the person you were the day before, never allowing yourself to become frozen in place. She loves your ability to think calmly and logically, and your ability to show such depths of emotion. You are her love.

"Flora, Techna loves you for all that you are. You are the foundation of her world, the solid base on which she has built her life. You are always there, never judging, never demanding. When the world ceased to make sense, when things began to change in ways she could not understand, you were there to guide her, offering a hand in an unfamiliar world. She loves your compassion and dedication, protecting all who need it and friendship to those who do not. She loves you for your strength, never begrudging the burdens placed on you. You are her love.

"And now, you plan to go forward from this place, and to do so as one. But marriage is not entered into lightly, even for those who live a normal span of years. For you who are both blessed and cursed with eternity, it must be an even more carefully considered decision. Before we may proceed, I must hear you confirm that this is still your wish.

"Flora, do you still wish to marry this woman before you? Do you come here freely and without reservation to join with her in marriage?"

"I do," Flora said, her voice quiet but firm.

"Techna, do you still wish to marry this woman before you? Do you come here here freely and without reservation to join with her in marriage?"

"I do," Techna said, her voice a match for Flora's.

"Very good," The Great Dragon said. **"You may now exchange vows."**

"Techna," Flora said. "You are a never-ending surprise to me. From the first time I fell in love with you, to the first time the loops reunited us, to falling in love with you all over again, to every day we've spent together, you have made my life worth living. Whenever I need comfort, whenever I need a friend, you are there for me in ways I could never have imagined. And so, I, Flora Victoria, do take you as my wife, to have and to hold for all of time. I promise to protect and love you, to stand by your side and watch over the world we share. Of all the souls in the Infinite Loops, you are the one I love, and the one I wish to spend forever with."

"Flora," Techna said. "You are the foundation of my world. From the fear of my first Awakening, to the confusion I felt at learning the truth, to the slow process of learning to love you again, and to everything that has come after, you have supported me through the most difficult of times. Whenever I am alone, whenever I am afraid, whenever I am hurt, you are there, making things right. And so, I, Techna of Zenith, do take you as my wife, to have and to hold for all of time. I promise to love you, to stand by your side in your mission to defend our world, to comfort you when you are in pain, and rejoice with you in joy. Though destiny may have had other plans, you are the one I love, and you always will be."

"The vows have been given," the Great Dragon said. **"I now ask that the rings be presented."**

There was the faint patter of little footsteps as Miele came the end of the hall, a cushion in her hands. The little girl hurried down the aisle before climbing up to the dais and placing the cushion on the altar.

Nestled in its velvet cover were two simple gold rings, one set with a purple sapphire, the other with an emerald. Miele smiled and curtseyed to the wedding party, then hurried back down the aisle.

"Seras Victoria," the Great Dragon said, nodding to the woman. Seras reached over and reverently lifted the sapphire ring from the pillow, then handed it to Techna.

"Asami Sato." Asami lifted the emerald ring and handed it to Flora.

"With these rings, the two of you place the seal upon your marriage and your commitment to each other," the Great Dragon said. **"Flora."**

Flora smiled and gently took Techna's left hand in her own, taking the emerald ring and carefully sliding it onto Techna's ring finger. It glittered in the light, and Flora's eyes danced with joy.

"Techna."

Techna took Flora's hand in her own and placed the sapphire ring on Flora's finger. A radiant smile covered her face.

"By my power as the Great Dragon of the Magic Dimension, I declare you wed," the Great Dragon said. **"You may kiss."**

Flora and Techna put the seal on their marriage.

"I present Flora and Techna Victoria," the Great Dragon said. **"May your years together be long and happy."**

Flora and Techna smiled as applause filled the hall.

"Alright people," Bloom said in her best traffic director voice. "Gifts go over there," she pointed off at a collection of tables over to one side of Alfea's ballroom. "If your gift is too large to be indoors, there will be a form you can fill out and we'll make sure your gift gets to the

brides at the end. Food is over there," she gestured to another set of tables off to the other side of the ballroom. "More will be coming out, so feel free to start whenever. Please try not to block the dance floor too much, don't stand in the doorway, and for Yggdrasil's sake, don't try to sit directly in front of the speakers. I know that shouldn't be an issue, but past experience has taught me otherwise. Thank you."

"Who put you in charge?" Aisha asked with a laugh as the crowd moved into the ballroom for the reception.

"Seras," Bloom said. "Nice catch, by the way. Looking forward to throwing your own soon?"

Aisha held up the bouquet. "This? You know that's just silly superstition, right?"

"Yes, and?" Bloom said. "Two of us got proposals in baseline, and I have… issues I'm going to have to work out with Sky when he finally starts looping. Is there anything you need to work out with Nabu?"

"What? No!" Aisha said."Nabu's great, even if he's not looping yet."

"He usually takes the Loops pretty well too, doesn't he?" Bloom asked. "I swear, you have the lowest maintenance boyfriend in the world."

"He doesn't do drama," Aisha said. "He has better things to do."

"My point exactly," Bloom said, throwing a glance over to where Musa was busy setting up her DJ station. "So, plans for the future?"

"I don't know," Aisha said. "First he has to start looping."

"He'll get there eventually," Stella said, walking into the conversation. "Aisha, I need your help with handling the gifts. I'm trying to keep up, but there's so many of them."

"There aren't that many people here," Aisha said.

"Yeah, and most of them are loopers," Stella said. "You don't even want to know what Pinkie Pie got for them."

"Yeah, but that's Pinkie Pie," Bloom said. "She's kind of her own special case."

"And this is Flora's wedding," Stella said. "I swear everyone has their own gift and three from people who weren't invited. Sound familiar?"

"Alright, I give," Bloom said.

"I'll help," Aisha said. "Could you hold this for me, Bloom?" She handed Bloom the bouquet and followed Stella over to the gift table.

"Great, stick me with the flowers," Bloom said, mostly to herself, rolling her eyes. "It's not like I'm busy or anything." She turned around and started chasing a few of the guests from where they were starting to block the doors.

"Great, now where do we put the Trigati?" Icy asked her sisters. Then she noticed they were with their dates. "No module, no idea where to put that ship, and all alone with the problem."

"I didn't realize you were invited," Musa said. "It's good to see you!"

"Good to see you again too, Musa," Fate said.

"Hayate was actually the one invited," Nanoha said. "We just got to tag along."

"Hayate?" Musa asked. "How does she know either of of them?"

"I met Techna in Eden Hall a while back," Hayate said from directly behind Musa, laughing as the fairy whirled in surprise. "We got into a fun conversation about AI design and programming and we've stayed in touch ever since."

"Oh, that makes sense," Musa said. "What specifically were you working on?"

"She's been considering installing an AI into her Zords," Hayate said. "Most of the AIs I work with use much smaller bodies, so it's an interesting challenge."

"That sounds… fun?" Musa said.

"Programming's really not your thing, is it?" Hayate said.

"Not really."

"That's too bad," Hayate said. "Oh, by the way, after the wedding, remind me to take a look at your devices. I've developed some new software updates that I think you'll like."

"Really? Thanks," Musa said. She glanced around, catching sight of a blond vampire. "I think Seras wants to talk to me about something, I'll catch up with you later."

"See you later," Hayate said as Musa hurried off. She turned and caught sight of the freshly married couple. "They're really happy together, aren't they?" she muttered, shaking her head fondly.

"It sure looks that way," Fate said.

"Remember when we were that young?" Nanoha asked, taking Fate's hand and gently squeezing it.

"I don't think their relationship involves nearly as many lasers as ours does," Fate said with a faint smile.

"But that's the best part!" Nanoha said with a laugh.

Musa tapped her microphone, producing an annoyingly loud clicking sound that echoed through the speakers and rolled over the party.

She smiled. "If everyone could please clear the dance floor, it's time for the brides' first dance."

There was a brief commotion as people cleared out of the way, forming a ring around the edge of the ballroom. Flora and Techna stepped out and met in the middle of the dance floor. Rather than clasp hands, they simply embraced.

"You know, I'm almost envious." Darcy commented as she hugged Musa from behind. "To think I used to despise these events... "

"Things change, sometimes for the better." Musa replied. "Now get out of the way, I have a job to do." Darcy chuckled and backed off as Musa hit the music.

Music started flowing from the speakers, soft and beautiful. Techna and Flora slowly turned in a circle, swaying slightly as they danced. Their eyes were closed as they moved, lost in their own world for as long as the music lasted.

"You're crying," Garrus noted.

"You want to make something of it?" Shepard asked.

"Nope," Garrus said. "Your girl's married. You get a free pass on this one."

"She's not my girl," Shepard said. "Not anymore."

"I know that feeling," Tommy Oliver said. "Not easy watching one of your kids grow up, is it?"

"No," Shepard said. "But it's worth it."

"We did a good job with this," Seras said.

"Yeah," Asami agreed. "Lots of work, but, yeah, we did good."

"They look so happy together," Roxy said.

"They certainly do," Bloom replied.

On the dance floor, Flora and Techna turned one last slow circle as the song came to its conclusion. They shared a kiss, then smiled out at the crowd.

Musa switched tracks to an upbeat dance tune and soon the couple was just one pair of many on the dance floor.

"Wait, you got Techna automatic circumcisers?" Alphys blinked.

"To be fair, I was grabbing stuff at random." Pinkie Pie shrugged.

"Here's to hoping she doesn't use them." Johnny Cage raised his drink.

"Agreed." Most of the other Loopers replied.

"so, whats your connection to the brides?" Sans asked the group. "for us, flora just went through our world, not killing people."

"INDEED! SHE IS A GREAT FRIEND!"

Alucard smiled.

"My abridged self sired her as a vampire, so therefore, I sired her. She is my servant, technically."

"Dat's just fucked up, man." Scout replied.

The Spy appeared out of nowhere again.

"As for us, Techna went through a Loop with us as ze Engineer. Her skills were exceptional, non?"

"Yeah, Techna did the same. She became a cyborg and sliced up all kinds of Metal Gears." Big Boss said.

"Flora woz an Ork. 'Nuff said, roight?" Bluddflagg smiled.

"Right then..." Harry Potter smirked. "I'll just say that she made a good impression on me."

The others felt conflicting feelings of surprise and expected as such.

Aisha and Nabu danced together on the floor, Aisha taking advantage of the opportunity to show off some of her moves.

"Okay," Nabu gasped, trying to get his breath back after a failed attempt at duplicating one of Aisha's dance moves. "I give up. I can't keep up with you."

"It's alright," Aisha said, swinging her head over to kiss him. "You never could." She spun away into another twisting dance move.

"Never?" he asked.

"Well there was that one loop where you were a break dancer," Aisha said. "Now that was a weird loop."

"I'm competing with myself now?" Nabu asked. "Clearly I need to step up my game."

"That's what you usually say," Aisha said, bending backwards to look up at his face. "It's one of the things I love about you."

"Aisha," Nabu began. "I… just…"

"Stop," Aisha said, spinning back to upright. "Nabu, I know what you're about to say. Please, don't. Don't make me reject you."

"Aisha…"

"It's not you," Aisha said. "I'd love to say yes. But I want to say yes once. Not thousands of times."

"I understand," Nabu said, nodding. "But once I finally start looping?"

"I'll say yes so fast we'll both get whiplash," Aisha said. "But not yet, okay?"

"Tell whatever Nabu finally gets you that he's a lucky man," Nabu said.

"I think he'll know," Aisha said. "But for this loop at least, you're the lucky man."

"I think I can live with that," Nabu grinned.

"I never realized getting married would be so exhausting," Techna said, sitting in one of the chairs scattered around the edge of the party as the dancing continued on the floor.

"I know," Flora said, sitting next to her. "I mean, I'm not tired, but…"

"You're undead," Techna said. "Do you even get tired anymore?"

"I do," Flora said. "But it takes a lot to get me there."

"Maybe once we're on our honeymoon we can see about exhausting you," Techna said.

"Techna…" Flora murmured.

"Oh good, I caught up with you," Fand said, appearing from the crowd.

"Fand," Flora said. "Good to see you. Are you enjoying the party?"

"As much as I can," Fand said. "It's not easy holding the loop together with this many visitors."

"Are you alright?" Techna asked.

"Fine," Fand said. "Frigg's manning my station for me and the Admins for all your guests are helping as well."

"Well that's good," Techna said.

"Definitely," Fand said. "Now, I wanted to tell you about the gift I… got you isn't the right word. Made?"

"Made?" Flora asked.

"I guess," Fand said. "It's not a physical gift. Well, sort of."

"Are you going to tell us what this mystery gift is?" Techna asked.

"Of course!" Fand said. "I redefined your wedding rings in the Yggdrasil system."

"And what does that mean?" Flora asked.

"Three things," Fand said. "The first is that your rings are… what do you loopers call it? Soulbound? Yes, I think that's it. They're soulbound to you. They'll follow you through the loops so you never have to worry about losing them."

"That's great!" Techna said. "Thank you."

"I wasn't finished!" Fand said. "Second, I made them impossible to break. They can't be broken, damaged, or even so much as scratched."

"That's nice of you," Flora said.

"And third, this is my favorite part, I made them resonate with each other," Fand said. "As long as you're wearing your respective ring and the two of you are in the same loop, you'll always be able to tell where the other ring is. That way you can always find each other."

"And we'll each know if the other's Awake," Techna observed.

"Thank you Fand," Flora said. "This is… This is amazing. Thank you so much."

"Anything for my favorite couple," Fand said. "Have fun you two."

"We will, thanks," Techna said.

"That is a lot of presents," Musa said as she looked over the pile.

"I know," Techna said. "And that doesn't even count the ones that were too big to be indoors. We're going to have to reorganize our Pockets just to make space for all of it."

"Wait, you organize your Pockets?" Musa asked.

"Yes?" Techna said, confused. "Don't you?"

"I just throw stuff in there," Musa said.

"You should try organizing it," Techna said. "The inside of Flora's Pocket is actually rather nice."

"Really?" Musa said, raising an eyebrow.

"Really," Techna said. "There's the entrance area where she keeps the things she uses a lot. That leads to her library, her greenhouse, her potions lab, her magic workshop, her photo album room, and on the other side-"

"Wait, Flora has separate rooms in her Pocket?" Musa demanded.

"Yes," Techna said. "Counting general storage, she has… nine rooms? That sounds right."

"Nine?" Musa asked.

"Well there's the five I mentioned, plus the entrance area," Techna said. "Then there's the place she stores certain things she takes out

whenever we aren't living at Alfea, furniture and the like, the room where she stores various forms of currency, and then a much larger space where she stores anything that doesn't go somewhere else. I'm not sure if that space counts as a room, given that it doesn't have walls or even a floor, but it does make up the majority of her Pocket, even if it sees the least use."

"Flora has a building in her pocket," Musa said.

"Of course she does," Techna said. "You can walk around in it and everything. I've got one too. You really should get one yourself. It makes organizing your Pocket so much easier."

"You know what? I think I'll leave that to you," Musa said. "I like my system just fine, thanks."

"I thought you said you don't have a system," Techna said.

"Exactly," Musa said.

"What is that?" Bloom asked the remote-wielding Icy.

"The Trigati, my sisters' and my present to the wedded couple." the ice witch asked.

"That I got, but what is it?"

"A Minbari Shargoti-class warcruiser, and a rare piece of advanced technology and rare technologies, with the old crew's personal weapons still inside. I don't think there's an equal of those outside their native Loop…"

Resisting the urge to shout, Bloom asked where they got it.

"You see, there was this Loop on a diplomatic space station when the crew, a group of Minbari renegades who deserted in protest for being ordered to not commit genocide, came by to try and restart the

war, so we took their ship for when Flora and Techna would tie the knot. And before you ask, the crew survived, more humiliating that way. Now, where is the module to deliver it?"

Bloom really felt like strangling the witch.

"I'm glad Techna ruled against any speeches," Asami said. "If I have to hear another one of Varrick's speeches ever again…"

"Why did she anyways?" Korra asked. "Say no wedding speeches I mean."

"I wasn't quite clear on that," Asami said. "I think she was afraid that Timmy would feel obligated to speak or something."

"Isn't he the socially awkward one?" Mako asked.

"And the one she dated in baseline?" Bolin asked.

"Yes and yes," Asami said. "I'm not sure why she was convinced that he'd try speaking, but I can understand not wanting him to." Mako winced slightly.

"Where are they anyways?" Korra asked, ignoring her ex's discomfort. "I haven't seen them in almost an hour."

"Flora and Techna?" Asami looked around. "I don't know."

"Should we go find them?" Bolin asked.

"No, you stay here," Asami said. "I'll- Seras!"

"Asami?" Seras asked, turning to face the dark haired engineer. "What do you need?"

"Do you know where Flora and Techna are?"

"Last I saw they were heading outside for a breath of fresh air," Seras said. "They might still be out there."

"I'll go look," Asami said.

Asami stepped out into Alfea's quad, taking a moment to breath in the cool night air. She glanced around and quickly located the newly married couple on one of the benches. Flora was sitting up, but Techna was laying down with her head in Flora's lap. Flora looked up from where she was gently running her fingers through Techna's hair and raised a finger to her lips.

"Ah," Asami muttered. She turned around and headed back inside. The party could continue without them.

"Mmmm," Techna murmured, shifting sleepily.

"Mmmm," Flora hummed back, still stroking Techna's hair. "I think you're done for today."

"Mmhm," Techna agreed.

"You're really not a party girl," Flora said. She gently pulled Techna into her arms, then rose to her feet, her new wife in her arms. "Time for bed." Wings formed on Flora's back.

"Mmmm," Techna hummed, nestling closer to Flora.

A quick spell later and they vanished in a flash of magic.

"Did you find them?" Seras asked.

"Yes," Asami said. "I don't think they're coming back in though."

"They're not… busy, are they?" Seras asked.

"Not even close," Asami said. "I'm pretty sure Techna's asleep."

"Flora's going to take her home then," Seras said.

"That sounds like the Flora I know," Asami said. "You'd almost think Techna was made of glass, the way Flora acts."

"Not really," Seras said. "She respects Techna, but Flora's a vampire. She can take a lot more than Techna, but Techna's the one with a habit of pushing herself too far, and Flora knows it."

"True," Asami said. "Whatever the reason though, the stars of the evening have left."

"Ah, let the party keep going," Seras said. "People are still having fun, and the couple's only real job tonight was to look pretty."

"I guess that works," Asami said, shaking her head. "We do have to kick everyone out eventually though."

"We'll get there when we get there," Seras said. "For now, let's just let the party keep going."

Flora gently placed Techna on her side of the bed and pulled the covers over her. "Good night," Flora said, kissing Techna's forehead. Techna made a contented noise and curled up under the blankets.

Flora smiled, then stepped out onto the balcony that was attached to their room. It was one of the features Flora liked about this house. No doubt she'd get tired of it eventually, but it had served as their house in Magix for the last sixteen hundred loops they'd both been Awake for and so far it had yet to lose its charm.

The moon hung in the sky, just a few days past full. She held up her hand, the sapphire ring glittering in the moonlight. "This is real," Flora told the night as she stared at the ring. "This… This is forever."

The night did not answer.

Flora looked out in the direction of Alfea. She really should go back, if only to say goodbye, but she really didn't want to be separated from Techna right now. Seras and Asami could handle it. They were the ones who'd done all the work anyways. She'd have to come up with some way to thank them later.

Later.

Flora turned around and headed back into the house. There would be plenty of later. But right now, it was time for sleep. She made her way over to the bed and slipped in next to Techna who immediately cuddled up to the new source of heat. Flora smiled and leaned into the embrace. She closed her eyes as the sound of her new wife's breathing lulled her to sleep.

A/N: Hey, we're back, and with something to actually show for our three months of quiet! Admittedly this is a bit late, as it was supposed to be our one-year anniversary celebratory project, but you can't rush some things. However, it's finally here, and I couldn't be happier.

To a full year of the Winx in Yggdrasil, and another year to come!

-Firehawk242

Chapter 22

22.1 (Solaris Requiem)

In a secluded location away from distractions two individuals are battling it out. This was certainly not the first time that the two individuals had clashed against each other, and it certainly wouldn't be the last time. Both of them enjoyed their clashes far too much to stop.

"You just keep picking up martial arts styles left and right, don't you?" Leah Clearwater grinned as she stomped forwards. She parried a punch that would have broken bone with her forearm, opening the guard of her opponent before she delivered a devastating elbow strike towards her opponent's torso.

" It's instinct." Scarface replied as he dodged out of the way of the strike and created distance between himself and his opponent. *" You've learned,"* he noted clinically as Leah shifted into a neutral stance. She was limiting herself to her human form albeit with several strength and defense enhancing spells while Scarface had discarded his weapons, mask, and majority of his armor.

The aim of this fight wasn't to kill each other after all. It was just a way for them to blow off steam and bond for the both of them. Had you asked the past Scarface that he would be sparring with a human rather than hunting them down, he would have scoffed and skinned you. Leah would have just laughed before moving on. But neither of them was complaining about their current situation.

Leah smirked. "I figured actually learning a few hyper-lethal martial arts styles would make things a bit more interesting. So a few Loops ago I ended up picking up Bajiquan and integrated with my CQC training. You like it?"

" Very," Scarface grinned. With a wordless charge, Scarface surged forward, closing the distance between the two of them in a blink of an eye. Leah didn't flinch as she managed to turn aside a few strikes with her solid defense. But the Scarface surged forward and slammed an elbow strike right at her midsection, knocking the wind out of her before a bone shattering kick sent the werewolf flying.

Leah regained her footing and coughed. "Son of a bitch, that hurt. That was a Bajiquan move. Did you seriously-"

" It's simple enough. **You already** figured out ***Brutal Tide and Fractured Wind."***

"Those took me five spars to reverse-engineer. I just started using Bajiquan a few minutes ago! Your kung-fu bullshit is just insane." Leah shook her head as she felt her bruises begin to quickly heal. "But then again, if I was able to curbstomp you this wouldn't be any fun."

" No fun." Scarface agreed as Leah charged forward. The two combatants exchanged strike after strike, some strong enough to cripple an ordinary human being instantly. But neither of them were normal.

Several minutes later, Leah had finally over-extended and Scarface capitalized on it. He swept his leg downwards the moment Leah's legs had positioned wrongly for the smallest of seconds before he sent her to the ground. The Yautja quickly straddled Leah's prone form and pinned her limbs to the ground with him atop of her.

"Well, damn. My loss. Normally I'm the one on top. Not bad, big guy. Not bad at all," Leah huffed with a satisfied grin on her face, not bothered by the slightest by Scarface's inhuman features as he shared the same expression as the werewolf despite the species barrier.

"GET OFF HER!" a voice cried out. Scarface barely had enough time to look around before he was bowled over by a blast of nature

magic, sending him sprawling backwards.

"What the-" Leah growled as she got up. Energy coursed through her body as she looked towards the attacker. "Don't interf-" the words cut off as she recognized the green ethereal dress and the dark skin of the visitor.

"Wait, you're Flora right?" Leah asked before Scarface froze in recognition.

" Oh, it's you again." Scarface stated. Within an instant Scarface called all of his weapons and armor to him, leaving him armed to the teeth. There was a strange and distinctly alien zweihander in his grasp; its cutting edge was two-dimensional symbols and glyphs that glowed bright blue.

"We can talk later. I just need to take care of this psycho first. Are you hurt?" Flora asked. Leah shook her head.

"We were just sparring," the werewolf replied as she dusted herself off. "You didn't have to interfere."

"Spar?! He was about to rip off your head!" Flora argued, completely and utterly astounded to see someone defend Scarface. The Predator huffed.

" I like sparring **her too much to just kill her.** *Chill out.* " Scarface replied.

"Chill out?!" Flora shouted as green magic began to surge around her body. "You killed all of my friends! Techna, Stella, and the others died because of you!"

" So?" Scarface shrugged, not even bothering to deny it or showing any sign of remorse. *" None of them were Awake;* they would have **put up a better fight** . **I already apologized last time."**

"How dare you-"

"Both of you cut it out." Leah growled, going full werewolf form and stepping between the two of them. "I have no idea what's going on here and I want to know exactly why you two are one inch away from killing each other. Now calm down and start talking."

Several minutes of explaining, arguing, and telling both involved parties to shut up and calm down, Leah Clearwater finally got the story from both sides.

"So basically, way back when during Scarface's first Loops when he had NO idea what the hell was going on, he hunted down several witches and fairies. Some of the people he killed included your unAwake friends. You responded by biting off his face and killing him." she summarized. Flora nodded as she kept a close eye on Scarface's armed and armored form. The Yautja stayed a good distance away from her, on guard and watching for any signs of hostility or an attack.

"Shepard said that you vouched for Scarface after you met him," Flora frowned as she turned to Leah. "Why? He's a psychopath with a hunting fetish! He rips off people's heads and hangs them on his wall like some sort of fucked up trophy collection!" Flora didn't have to hold her tongue and watch what she said since none of her friends were around to center herself. She was riding on the wave of fury and frustration that came every time she remembered how Scarface killed every single person that she knew and cared about.

"You… know… nothing," Scarface growled, abandoning his equipment to speak on his own for the first time. He voice was guttural and biting, but every single word was laced with venom. His computer carried on for him. ***" We have our honor. We have our culture. You are just too naive to understand them."***

"Naive?! Any person who isn't completely and utterly insane know that what you do is wrong! Anyone who isn't a sociopath knows what you do is fucked up."

" We are different than you. No matter how much you try, you will never understand."

"I'm not a monster and I'm not a bad guy. I don't want to be like you, I don't want to understand you!"

"Both of you shut up!" Leah snarled, fed up with the back and forth arguing. "Listen. I frankly don't give a damn if you two have problems with each other. I'm not expecting you to make up, but I sure as hell want the both of you to stop trying to kill each other on sight."

Scarface tried to generate a response on his computer, but the werewolf's glare was more than enough to make him stop. Flora tried to speak up but was similarly cowed by Leah as well.

"Here's what's going to happen. You two are going to agree to a truce right here and come up with a compromise should you two Loop together. Flora, what do you want?"

"I just want him to stay away from my friends. That's it. He has a spaceship, right? I just want him to get on it, and go to a completely different planet."

" No," Scarface growled. *" The magical creatures* ***are interesting and unique prey*** . ***I will not harm your 'friends'*** **but everything else is fair game."**

"If you do anything to the magical world, we'll get drawn into it! And then what? You'll just kill us the moment that we let our guards down!"

" I will keep my word."

"I wouldn't trust a single word from a monster like you. Had Leah not been next to you, I would have nuked you on the spot."

"Flora, you need to compromise. Scarface has agreed to something. If you think he won't stick with the agreement then we're all just

wasting time." Leah growled. The fairy frowned.

"Why are you defending him? He's-"

"We've saved each other's asses more times than either of us could count. We wiped out the elder vampire clans in my home Loop single-handedly. After that was all said and done, we ended up visiting a couple of planets to purge Xenomorph hives, among other things. It was the most fun I've had in a baseline Loop for centuries," the werewolf said as she pulled two weapons from her Pocket. One was a simple long-sword with a black edge. The other was a short dagger with wavy blade that crackled with ominous light and energy.

"Sounds like you two were more than just sparring partners," Flora quirked an eyebrow. Leah shrugged, neither Scarface or Leah looked apprehensive about disclosing such a private matter.

"We fooled around a bit but neither of us wants a relationship. So we're just… friends with benefits I guess. But enough talking about me." Leah put the two weapons that Scarface had given her back into her Pocket before turning to Flora.

The werewolf sighed. "I know how Scarface thinks. He will keep his word. Just stop seeing him as the next DIO in the making and just try to work with him."

Flora finally relented, "Fine. But if he attacks any of my friends, I won't hold back."

" I'm not stupid. *I don't want to get my face eaten off again* . **The agreement will be honored.** " Scarface replied. Leah sighed in relief.

"Good. That's about as close of a compromise that we're probably going to get. Now then, Flora if you don't mind Scarface and I have another round of sparring to do."

Flora sighed and excused herself from the area, not expecting Scarface to keep his word but striving to keep her end.

"...Thanks." Scarface huffed without a computer to speak for him. Leah grinned before the two resumed their previous positions.

"Don't sweat it, big guy. It's what friends are for. Now then, let's pick up where we left off. Your move."

And so them moved back into their positions before charging at each other without a care in the world.

22.2 (Awesomedude17)

"Steve," Bunnylord started. "a while ago, I caught a bunch of people trying to kill this fine, young lady. Although you could say that she is a dirty hippy, and you'd be correct, she's also dirty because she was covered in blood when I met her, after she used this cannon thing to kill a bunch of crooks in a single shot. Now, I'm not sure how that's possible for her, but I'm not questioning it. She liked how I looked though, and I realized that she could... like.. totally kick butt... and stuff."

Flora looked between Bunnylord, who was a giant, purple, rabbit thing who was drinking from his milkshake, and the balaclava-wearing Steve, who looked like he just went through a warzone.

"Steve... The Bunnylord Fun Club might be best to have 10 members, me and you included, but I decided that since I made the club, I get to decide the rules, so Flora's now one of us. Now, all that's left is to take care of Akemi Unagi." Bunnylord took a sip of his milkshake.

Flora wondered what the Loops brought her to.

"Flora, little help please?" Bunnylord said as he struggled with Akimi's sword fighting. Flora snarled as she grabbed a near-by ninja's head and smashed it to the ground. She jumped high into the air, then landed next to the two. She grabbed Akimi by her head, and then tossed her high into the air, until she disappeared with a glimmer.

"... Wow. Didn't see that coming. Let's go... We still need to leave before I can become Mayor."

Flora looked up to the helicopter that was their escape vehicle, then the incoming SWAT officers coming in by helicopters.

She wasn't going to like the rest of this Loop if this was going to be what she signed up for.

22.3 (Awesomedude17)

The Winx Club were annoyed at this Loop already. At some point, some wizards took over Earth, and her family had to evacuate to Magix. Then Magix got invaded along with many other world. Once Flora confirmed that everyone was Awake, she, the Winx, the Trix, Roxy and Timmy went to Earth to find this conquest driven villain.

They soon found the mastermind was based in England, and made their way.

After a lot of fighting, they soon burst into the throne room of the ruler of the army.

"We're here to stop you!"

"OH THANK GOD, I WAS GETTING PISSED OFF AT THIS BOLLOCKS!"

"Wait... Harry?" Flora blurted out.

Harry Potter took the crown from his head and tossed it to the ground. "Yes, Flora. Thank God you're here. Just kill me already."

"Wait, how the hell did you become a multiversal conqueror?" Darcy point a finger at the O7.

"I was sorted into Hufflepuff. Don't ask, just kill me before reinforcements come."

"Maybe we could depower you..."

"No dice, Stella. Every wizard this Loop's a bloody retard. They'll just do something stupid."

"Oh for the love of..." Icy flash-freezed Harry, then made a giant hammer made of ice, and crushed the wizard right before the reinforcements. She then turned to the group, and made several ice crystals.

As the screaming commenced, Flora facepalmed.

"I hate this Loop so much."

In the next bar Loop.

"So wait, every time you're in Hufflepuff, you conquer Magical England?" Timmy asked.

"Well, I conquer something. I once conquered a bloody bathroom." Harry took a long drink from his mug. "That ended up with Snape ending up in an asylum, and I have no idea why."

"Harry, you have a charmed life." Aisha said.

"You have no idea. Thanks again, Icy."

"No problem." Icy said as she drank her drink.

22.4 (Awesomedude17)

Musa brought out her newest toy.

"The Dubstep Gun." Flora folded her arms.

"Yes!"

"The Dubstep Gun." Techna folded her arms.

"Yes!"

Flora and Techna looked at each other.

"How was the alien invasion?" Flora asked.

"Not good, but it was really fun using this thing. And so was using that floppy, purple-"

"OOOOOOOKAY! Enough of that!"

"What, it's hilarious."

"Yeah, I doubt anyone wants to hear about you using an oversized..." Techna coughed. "...to smack around aliens and simulation police."

"Have you girls lost all sense of adventure?"

"No, we just got good taste."

22.5 (Shimmer712)

Bloom blinked in the corridor and quickly sent out a ping as Diaspro walked towards her.

Hmm. I'll take the opportunity to handle this differently , she decided as a number of pings rang out. "Excuse me?"

The blonde fairy stopped and gave a Bloom a polite smile. "Yes? May I help you?" Diaspro didn't really appreciate the interruption. She needed to make sure Sky was okay. He was a nice guy, and he certainly wasn't stupid, he was just a bit thoughtless sometimes. Unfortunately, as a prince, that trait could land him in big trouble, especially since Eraklyon was so politically unstable at the moment. But there was no reason to take it out on this peasant girl. Of course, the girl's query did *not* make Diaspro happy.

"Why do you have a picture of my boyfriend Brandon?" Diaspro was caught off guard but quickly re-orientated herself. She couldn't correct the girl regarding Sky's identity, the whole reason he was under an alias was to keep him safe from assassins. His friend Brandon was either kind enough or politically savvy enough to volunteer to go by the Prince's name while Sky's went by his. But she didn't want to lie to the girl either.

"Oh, you two know each other?" she smiled brightly, mentally promising Sky that she would be having *words* with him later. "I'm from Eraklyon, same as him. Our families do business together and we've known each other since we were little!" The girl perked up.

"Oh, I'm Bloom, nice to meet you," she said cheerfully.

"I'm Diaspro," the blonde returned. Diaspro really hoped that Sky hadn't intentionally been stringing some poor girl along while he had an arranged betrothal. Unfortunately, that hope died when some other girls showed up and viewed "Brandon" as Bloom's boyfriend. Meaning her fiancé was cheating on her with this girl.

Okay, she *really* needed to talk to Sky. While she had her own reservations about being married to Sky, the fact that it would for the good of Eraklyon was enough to ensure her co-operation, regardless of what she may want. That fact that Sky had grown into an attractive and nice young man was merely a bonus and a relief. So either Sky was reckless enough to risk Eraklyon, or he had every intention of later dumping a girl who clearly adored him. She didn't

like the implications of either option, although the dumping one had fewer politically consequences.

Diaspro hid a wince as one girl, Princess Stella of Solaria, was chirping happily about how no one back home could object to her dating Sky because he held royal status as well. Diaspro *knew* that the Sky Stella was talking about was actually a commoner named Brandon. Meaning that a princess, one who was known to be doted on by her father, was being deceived and Eraklyon's Crown Prince not only *knew, but was actively encouraging it!* The fact that Sky was stringing along said princess' best friend wasn't helping matters. This had the potential to be a **Huge** political disaster!

Diaspro had been raised to be the brain behind the throne. She had been raised to ensure Sky didn't carelessly led Eraklyon into disaster. She would be the mind, the one who planned things out and figured out how to benefit Eraklyon while Sky would be the face, the one in the spotlight. Her childhood had consisted of being trained for politics, diplomacy, negotiations, everything and anything that would be vital for a ruler. She could figure a way to resolve this peacefully. She *had* to.

First though, she needed to get Sky alone so he could explain himself!

Diaspro contemplated leading the girls out to watch the matches, and making a point to stand next to Bloom where Sky could see them, just to make him sweat. The red head was a sweet girl, although Diaspro was picking up hints of a very nasty temper. This girl was no pushover. So, while she hated the fact that she had been cheated on, she could at least approve of his taste. She was still going to hurt him though.

Meanwhile, Bloom was noting that everything Stella and Aisha had told her about the other fairy's motives seemed to be quite right, going by her reactions this loop. Bloom wondered what Diaspro was going to do about the fact that Sky had a girlfriend. Feeling somewhat guilty about the trouble she was putting her boyfriend into,

she still decided that it should be pretty funny, after all, it wasn't like he didn't deserve to sweat a bit, right?

22.6

Aisha stood at the edge of a cliff. This was the tallest cliff on the tallest mountain in the Magic Dimension. She stood less than three feet short of a thirty mile drop down a sheer cliff face. An ordinary human couldn't survive up here without specialized gear. It was too cold, the air was too thin, and the process of getting here would have killed them a dozen different ways. It would be foolish to expect anything less from the peak of a mountain that was twice as tall as Olympus Mons and six times the height of Mount Everest. An ordinary fairy wouldn't be able to survive up here either. The mesosphere was not a place for most forms of life.

But loopers were a whole different matter. Aisha smiled, then took a step forward. She hung there for a moment, teetering on the edge. Then she leaned forwards and toppled off the cliff.

She plummeted down the side of the mountain, using her body to steer herself away from the cliff face before turning head down to minimize air drag. She fell like a spear thrown from on high, the wind tearing the sound of her laughter from her before it so much as reached her ears. Behind her, a peal of thunder rolled back through the atmosphere as she broke the sound barrier. And still she fell, the wind hammering at her.

She reached thicker atmosphere and began to slow, her own sonic boom catching up to her with bone rattling force.

"Believix!" Aisha shouted. "Speedix!" The requested wings formed on her back. She was now in control of her descent.

So she accelerated, still heading straight down. Fresh thunder rolled through the air as she broke the sound barrier for a second time as she charged down the mountain. This time the shock wave had a

much thicker atmosphere to propagate through, and the blast struck the mountainside. Slabs of stone broke free from the cliff and started to fall as if in a futile attempt to catch the falling fairy. And still Aisha flew downwards, shock waves rippling out behind her as she poured on the speed.

Still a full mile up, she was now moving at three times the speed of sound. She pulled up in a crushing turn, g-forces slamming into her as her wings hauled her away from a deadly impact with the ground. Scarcely a hundred feet short of the ground, she leveled off into horizontal flight, scorching across the ground at speeds no living being should be able to achieve.

The entrance of a massive canyon yawned in front of her and she shot into it without even a moment's hesitation. Still moving at twice the speed of sound, she blitzed through the enormous canyon, the shock waves of her flight leaving rock slides in her wake. The end of the canyon was upon her and Aisha flashed out over an open plain. She leaned back into another crushing turn as she pulled up into vertical flight. She bled speed as she rose, coming to a stop some five miles up.

Then she fell again, flipping over backwards to fall headfirst again. Falling at a comparatively slow speed, she made her way down, controlling her flight to come to a gentle landing on the ground in front of an appreciative audience.

"You know Master Chief survived reentry in baseline without a parachute, right?" Musa said.

Okay, maybe calling the audience "appreciative" was stretching it.

"He's a super soldier," Aisha countered. "And he was wearing his armor."

"And you're a fairy looper," Musa said. "And you have that weird Aura stuff from that fused loop you went through, making you tougher than a super soldier."

"I just fell thirty miles!" Aisha said. "What more do you want?"

"Meh," Musa said. "I've seen better."

Aisha sighed. "This is one of the problems with the loops. No matter how absurd your stunt, there's always someone who's already done something even more insane."

"Yep," Musa said cheerfully. "Though I've never seen one person cause that many avalanches in such a short period of time before."

"Well I suppose that's something," Aisha said, shaking her head. Her friends were way too jaded.

22.7 (Awesomedude17)

"So, how are we handling the WBC this Loop?" Musa asked.

"Well, recently, I went to another Branch and found a new friend. He's in the Loop now, I just need to build his body first." Techna said.

The others were quiet.

"Excuse me?" Stella asked.

A sole being walked to the Wizards of the Black Circle and caught their attention.

"Who are you?"

"Hola, Mi nombre es Lopez la Pesada. Prepararse para morir, pajarones." Lopez then took out a Spartan Lazer and opened fire on the Wizards.

"So Lopez is from some place called Blood Gulch, and he's a robot who can only speak in badly translated Spanish?"

"Si, Musa." Techna replied.

"I would love to visit!"

"Trust me, you don't."

22.8 (Awesomedude17)

A mechanical crab thing was destroying Magix. Flora stood in front of the machine's makers.

"Rakszan, Gordon, and Techna. What drove you to make this machine?"

"Well, let's just say it started with booze, foof, and a discussion about replicating some weapons from that Safe-Mode loop involving time traveling zombies and some homosexual, I guess, Nazi scientist guy and his three buddies." Gordon Freeman started.

"We were trying for a pump machine that uses spider venom, a special type of seaweed and some purified radioactive thing." Rakszan added.

"Which is why I asked you to help me get the former two." Techna said.

"So that's why we ended up fighting a giant spider." Flora facepalmed.

"After that, we tried to make the machine, but we drank Everclear from the bottle at that point because we were bored." Gordon said.

"You mean you." Techna said.

"Hey, let's just say we were all drunk and leave it at that. Anyway, we accidentally scaled up the design, and some minor alterations ended up making a clockpunk machine that was self-aware, so it made a

bigger robot, which made a bigger robot, which made a bigger robot, etcetera, etcetera, until that thing was made."

"And that's how Gordon made our experiment into a death machine." Rakszan said.

"You mean-"

"Gordon, shut up. Good thing this thing is barely on C-list comic book tier." Techna said.

BOOM

"There, problem solved. Can I go now, I think the heroin is wearing off for me." Gordon pinched his arm.

"Fleshbags." Rakszan quietly said.

22.9 (lord Martiya)

"Flora, what's happening?" Darcy asked her Anchor about the new dress style of the people this Loop.

"Hipster subroutine, Fand told me of this." she replied. "Didn't I tell you about it?"

"I know, what I mean is why they're all wearing the same glasses as me."

"I think they're actually called hipster glasses, and-"

Flora realized in horror what she had just unleashed, just as Darcy produced a bullhorn and shouted: "HEY LOSERS! I WORE HIPSTER GLASSES BEFORE YOU MADE IT COOL!"

And with that Flora had to follow her fellow Looper as she ran by the now furious hipsters of that Loop.

22.10 (Awesomedude17)

Flora and Techna stared at the various demon corpses the visiting Anchor presented them, steadily making the couple even more uneasy about the Fused Loop they were in.

"This is the Mancubus." Doomguy said, showing off the bio-mechanical beast.

"Did you mean incubus?" Techna replied.

"No. These fuckers have cannons for arms, and are as ugly as the rest. Now for the Cyberdemon."

Flora and Techna stepped back as Doomguy took the giant demon out of his pocket.

"How'd you kill that thing?" Flora half yelled.

"Pro tip girls, to defeat the Cyberdemon, shoot at it until it dies."

"With what, exactly?"

"... Guns!"

The couple rolled their eyes.

22.1: Flora, you should know better than to make assumptions by now.

22.2: I'm... honestly not sure what this is. It seems to involve bunnies though, so it's all good.

22.3: Harry's Hufflepuff curse strikes again. Taking over the world probably gets boring once you've done it enough times.

22.4: I... think this is Saint's Row. I could be wrong, but that sounds right. It's definitely strange enough to be.

22.5: That was pretty sleazy of Sky. If/when he ever starts looping, he's going to have some serious explaining to do.

22.6: Loopers are pretty much by definition rather thoroughly jaded. That said, I think Musa was just giving Aisha a hard time.

22.7: Red vs. Blue. No Musa, you do not want to visit. Ever.

22.8: And this is why Gordan Freeman is not one of the more popular inhabitants of Yggdrasil.

22.9: Attack of the hipsters!

22.10: Doom, where "shoot it until it dies" isn't a strategy, it's a way of life.

Vegas Mistakes

(Awesomedude17)

Musa sighed as she looked out the window. Flora and Techna had just been married and she was now getting lonely. Sure, romance wasn't her thing, but she still felt weird without someone to be with her.

Nonetheless, she was still happy.

A letter appeared in front of her. Musa took it and opened it. She soon looked at the note.

Dear Musa:

We're having a great time on our honeymoon. Don't worry if you were. As for the reason we sent you this letter, we just wanted to thank you for doing so much to make our wedding as perfect as possible, barring a surprise visit from Gordon Freeman, but Toriel took care of him quickly, especially before he spiked the punch.

Anyway, as a way to say thanks, this Loop, I decided to use some precognition to get the lottery numbers for the jackpot.

After that, we distributed the money, and had extra, so here.

$100,000 for you and the rest of the girls, the Trix included.

Try not to spend it all at once, we do not want a repeat of Vegas again.

Love, Flora and Techna.

P.S. The PIN's 0619.

Musa then saw the debit card on the bottom and squeed. $100,000, all ready to spend.

Musa heard knocking on the door. She went to the door and opened it.

"Did you see the letter Flora and Techna got us?" Darcy asked, holding up her own debit card.

"$100,000?"

"$100,000! This calls for a Vegas adventure!"

"Are you sure? I mean, last time I went there, I kinda... got drunk enough to sonic boom Area 51."

"Nah, we're just gonna gamble away our cash."

"That sounds... kinda fun actually."

"Yeah. Don't worry, I got a buddy who can fake IDs for us."

"Who?"

" So, the IDs, Gordon."

"Yeah, here they are. Now where's my potato acid?"

"Here it is. Applejack's brand."

"HA! Screw you aliens! Screw you Military! Screw you all, I've got firebombs now!"

"Someone who has waaaay too much free time." Darcy smirked.

Musa blinked, then tilted her head. "...Oooookay then. So, Vegas?"

"Vegas!"

Las Vegas Strip

The sunset was glowing Vegas with a golden orange. The sheer magnificence of the city brought awe to the two visiting Loopers.

"Wow, this is going to be fun." Musa said.

"Yeah. So, what do we do first?" Darcy asked.

"...Get drunk?"

Darcy groaned as she rubbed her forehead, clearly not enjoying her hangover.

She rolled over, and soon realized that she was not alone in her bed.

"What the..." She patted the person besides her.

"Stop it~. I have a hangover."

"Wait... MUSA!"

"Wait... DARCY!"

"What are *you* doing here?"

"What are *you* doing here?"

"Okay, let's figure this... out." Darcy trailed off, looking at the ring on her hand. Musa did so with her own hand, and then grinned widely.

"No." Darcy muttered.

"Yes." Musa grinned even wider.

"No!"

"Yes!"

"No!"

"Yes!"

"I can't be married to you!"

"You can, and you are. Now gimme a smooch!"

"I- Shut up!"

"I will if you kiss me."

"It... It doesn't count. We were drunk!"

Musa looked at the bedside, and grabbed a document. "This marriage document says otherwise."

"Just... shut up! This is the last time I go to Vegas with you."

"If you say so. How did we get married though?"

"Ugh, it's like that movie... what was it?"

"The Hangover?"

"No, not the same. Guess we're in for an adventure."

"Alright, my love."

"Stop teasing me, it's..."

"Cute?"

"GAAAAAAH!"

The two newlyweds sat down at their motel, eating breakfast quietly.

"So, how did we get married?" Musa asked with curiosity.

"Okay, let's retrace our steps." Darcy took a sip of coffee. "What was the first thing we did?"

"Okay... we got drunk."

Musa and Darcy came across as random bar and went in.

"So, what's your poison?" The bartender asked as the two sat down on the counter.

"I dunno. Musa?"

"Hmmmmmmm... That!"

The bartender looked at the bottle and raised an eyebrow.

"Absinth? You sure you two can take it?"

"I can hold my liquor."

"Alright, IDs?"

The two girls showed off their IDs, which got a smile from the bartender, who got the bottle, and two glasses.

"Enjoy."

"Thanks." The two said at the same time. "Cheers!"

"Absinth, we're fucking idiots." Darcy buried her face in her arms.

"It wasn't even good absinth."

"Alright... Let's try to figure out what we did. Musa, get us some cash from the ATM."

"Yeah sure." Musa got up and went to the ATM. After trying to get some money, she got an error message.

"What the hell?" Musa then checked her account.

"Uh oh."

"What?"

"I'm out, drained."

"What?!" Darcy then checked her account, and saw that she was drained too.

"WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO OUR CASH?!"

Memory gathering:

Darcy stomped back and forth, angry beyond all belief.

"How did we waste all of our money in one night? Even a night of gambling shouldn't drain us of $200,000, American!"

Musa rubbed her temples. This was the first really bad thing she heard recently.

"I don't know. All I know is this, we're screwed without cash money."

"D-don't you have a cell phone or something?"

Musa reached into her pocket and took out a cell phone, snapped in half.

"Yeah." Musa tossed aside the broken phone.

"GAAAH! This is all your fault!"

"My fault? It was your idea to go to Vegas!"

"And it was your idea to go drinking absinth. Who knows how we spent our cash."

Musa's eyes widened with clarity.

"How we spent our cash..."

Musa and Darcy stumbled into the pawn shop and looked around.

"Oh my gosh, they literally have $100K of gold for sale... Let's buy it." Musa slurred.

"NO! That's stupid. Let's buy all those Jimi Hendrix autographed guitars." Darcy pointed

Musa gasped. "That's even better!"

Musa reached into her Pocket, and took out a Hendrix guitar.

"Oh my God, I own an autographed Jimi Hendrix guitar!"

"Musa!"

"I'm sorry, Darcy, but I've got something out of this, well, two things."

"Wait, a guitar shouldn't..."

Darcy and Musa reached into their pockets, and found a variety of musical instruments autographed by various musicians.

After finding a receipt, they found out that they spent only $40,000 for the instruments.

"Okay, the music instruments only took out a small chunk, not enough to bankrupt us." Darcy said. "Maybe we gambled away most

of the rest."

"Right, let's find out which casino we went to."

"Or casinos."

Musa and Darcy walked down The Strip, dressed for the hot weather and looking around. Darcy spoke us.

"Alright, let's go find the casino and-"

"HEY!"

The two turned to see a fat Elvis impersonator, stomping up to them.

"What the... Who are you?"

"I'm the guy you clocked!" 'Elvis' said, taking off his shades to reveal a shiner.

"Darcy!"

"Listen Musa, I was drunk."

"Like that matters, I've got a black eye!" 'Elvis' pointed at his eye.

"Who cares, your kind's a dime a dozen!" Darcy spat back, causing Musa to glare at her wife.

"Look, I'm sorry about my-"

"Shut it, just stay the hell away from me!" 'Elvis' then stomped off.

"What the hell was that?" Musa asked.

"I think I remember."

" FUCK YOU, FAT ELVIS!"

SMACK

"Ow, dammit!"

"Why'd you punch an Elvis impersonator in the face?"

"I dunno, I guess I hate those freaks for some reason. They're like... hobos with a lame job!"

"Oh, Darcy."

"Come on, let's see if we wasted some money at a casino."

Musa put a finger on her chin.

"Actually, I think we doubled our winnings there."

" Put it all on 37, black!"

"Darcy, that's just stupid!"

"37, black! The purple haired girl and the brunette wins."

"You were saying, M-musa."

"I'm way too sober to be happy about this. Let's go to the bar."

" Yeah, winning so much is lame."

"I stand by the fact that winning money with almost no effort is still lame."

"Whatever. Let's just figure out how we lost all that money."

"Let's check out the casino just in case."

The casino owner rubbed his temples when an employee knocked on his office door.

"Boss, they're back."

"Who?"

"The girls who cost us $150,000!"

"...I'll go speak with them." The tired casino owner said as he got up from his seat. He walked over to the entrance and spoke with the two.

"How can I help you two?"

"Yes, uh, we're retracing our steps to figure out what happened last night." Musa said.

"Well, we can look at the footage. By the way, thanks for stopping after the 150K mark."

"I was too bored to continue playing. Winning too often is lame." Darcy rolled her eyes.

"Right." The owner muttered. They soon found themselves at the security room where they looked over the camera footage.

"Right, check the bar."

Musa and Darcy walked to the bar, where they saw a familiar face.

"Hold on... Is that you?" Darcy asked.

"Tucker?"

"In the flesh girls. Shame you didn't want me for your after wedding party. How was it, the best kind of fun? Bow chika wow wow!" Lavernius Tucker smiled as he raised his glass of amber liquor.

"Why are you here?" Darcy demanded.

"Me and the guys were having a Vacation Loop, and we met you two. You were kinda drunk, and apparently won a shitload of cash. After that you apparently spent it all with Caboose."

"...Uh oh."

" I want a pony!" Caboose said out loud.

"Sure thing!" Musa replied.

"YAY!"

"Uhhh..."

"I love my pony!" Caboose rode his horse into the casino while the police were chasing him.

"The damages that fucking horse made cost you like... exactly $130,000 dollars. Darcy's account was drained." Tucker shrugged.

"And how do you know that?" Musa asked.

"You told me and Church."

"Right... so we know how Darcy lost her cash."

CRASH

"TUCKER DID IT!"

Tucker rolled his eyes as he took another sip of his drink.

"I really hate that idiot." Darcy growled under her breath.

"Something wrong?" Tucker asked.

"We're out of cash." Musa said.

"Right. Hold on." Tucker took out a phone and called a number. "Sarge, remember when Grif invented that thing that won him a lot of cash, which turned out to be your invention, and you successfully sued for his money? Musa and Darcy need cash. Wire them, like... $50,000 each. Okay, thanks!" Tucker hung up.

"Wait, you're friends with Sarge?"

"Yeah, we... kinda have an odd friendship. Anyway, you should get some cash back."

"Alright, you mentioned that you were at our wedding. Where did we get married?"

"Follow me, I'll show you."

"No." Darcy said.

"Yep." Tucker replied.

"No!"

"Yep."

"NO!"

"Yep. You got into holy matrimony, thanks to Donut."

"Oh hey, girlfriends! How's your first day of marriage going?" Donut asked.

"Since when were you a minister?" Musa asked as Darcy began to scream out a string of expletives.

"Since yesterday, when Miss Rarity dared me to be one."

"Actually, she said she wasn't sure if you were minister material." Tucker corrected.

"And why would she say something so ridiculous?"

"Well..."

"Listen, this shouldn't have happened at all!" Darcy yelled.

"What? Why?"

"Because we were drunk."

Musa looked over to Darcy with a sad look on her face.

"... Ooooooooh! I thought you were being silly because of how happy you were!" Donut moved sheepishly.

"Does that mean...?" Musa asked before trailing off.

"Well... I'm not sure, but I'll look at my paperwork. If I know my marriage laws..."

"No you don't." Tucker interrupted.

"Than you two could get an annulment to your marriage, and I'll refund your marriage fees."

"Wait, marriage costs money now? Since when?"

"Since... I don't actually know. I just assumed that in Vegas, since you use a lot of cash, that you'd get the chance to marry people to get money."

"...That makes more sense than it should."

"So uh... How much was the fee?" Darcy asked.

"Ten bucks."

"...I'm surprised that it isn't more."

"Darcy." Tucker said.

"Well, I've got to compete with the others here." Donut explained.

"Huh... I wonder..." Darcy said with a coy smile.

"Darcy!" Tucker shouted louder.

"Oh boy... I made new competition. Oh well! The more, the merrier!" Donut looked at Tucker.

"I think I know what I'm going to-"

"DARCY!"

"What?!"

"Musa ran off, man! She looked like she was about to cry."

"Wait, what?" Darcy ran off, leaving the two Loopers in the room.

"So uh, Tucker?"

"Going away now. Later." Tucker walked off.

"Well fine! I can have fun all by myself! It's time for my daily wine and cheese hour anyhow!"

Darcy rode through the streets of Vegas on a motorcycle, trying to find Musa. If there was one thing she could count Musa on doing, it

was using sound in unusual ways. In this case, she probably was either making her movements completely silent as she ran off, or she was moving at the speed of sound. Neither of those possibilities were very appealing to Darcy.

It was something to admire. Come to think of it, this was exactly the thing she'd use her powers for if she thought about it hard enough. And then there was their choice of men. Heh, Riven might not have been the perfect boyfriend, but she did think he was hot anyway, in the 'bad boys are sexy' kind of way. Hell, Musa and Darcy are so alike, it was like they were...

Made...

For...

Each...

Other...

' Oh no, please don't tell me that I'm...'

Darcy stopped at the motel she was staying in, and sighed.

' Now I'm having second thoughts about this marriage...'

' Damn it.'

Darcy walked into the motel room and saw Musa crying into a pillow. A pang of guilt hit her and she cringed.

"Musa?"

"Go away." Musa said sternly.

"Musa, I came to talk."

"Oh, I thought you didn't want to be with me."

"I didn't want to be married to you... at least... not like this."

"... Excuse me?" Musa said as she lifted her head from the pillow.

"...Look Musa, let's just get this over with. You're a great friend, and I'm glad I got the chance to know the real you. But this day... It just came way too fast for me to understand. I mean, last night alone was an experience with the casino, fat Elvis and Caboose's Pony."

"Heh, it sure was."

"When you ran off, I got worried, and I started to think about you... and I realized that we're so alike. We actually have so much in common."

"True...*sniff* True..."

"And I started thinking, 'Maybe while marriage was too much right now, we could... you know... go steady... if that's okay with you."

"Hmmmmm. I dunno..."

Darcy frowned.

"If what you're saying is true, then prove it." Musa wiped the tears from her face, and stood up, holding out her arms.

"Give me a smooch."

Darcy put her hand on her chin.

"Hmmmmm. I dunno..."

Musa frowned.

Darcy stepped closer to Musa.

"I mean... will you shut up?"

Musa raised an eyebrow.

Darcy smiled and pulled Musa closer, giving her a short kiss on the lips.

"MWAH!" Darcy saw the awestruck look on Musa's face and laughed.

"Hahaha... Look at your face. It's so dorky."

"Uh..."

"So, how about we go back to Donut and decide if we let the marriage stay this Loop, or annul it." Darcy held out a hand.

"Uh... okay then." Musa grabbed it. Darcy quickly ran out of the room, causing Musa to yelp.

(Several Loops Later)

"Where's Darcy?" Stormy demanded.

"How should we know?" Bloom answered. "We've been looking for Musa."

"Well where do you suppose either are?" Icy asked.

"Honestly, we don't." Aisha asked.

"And I doubt we'll figure out soon." Stella added. "So let's just join together and find those two."

"Ugh, if only Flora and Techna were here." Bloom rubbed her temples.

"We don't need them. We can find those two ourselves." Stormy said as she opened a door.

To the surprise of the six girls, they saw Musa and Darcy making out. The two noticed the unwelcome guests and broke the kiss.

"Close the door!" Darcy shouted.

Wordlessly, Stormy closed the door.

"Found them."

"It was inevitable." Bloom shrugged before walking off.

"Would someone explain to me what's going on?" Icy asked.

Firehawk242's note: So Awesomedude did a thing (again), and, well, this happened. It's a bit smaller than his other works, but he's working with just two characters here, so I'll cut him some slack. I think they're just dating at this point, but damifino what's really going on here. Riven is gonna be severely weirded out at some point.

Also, I know it's been a while since our last regular update. We're working on it, but it's been slow going, particularly since I (Firehawk242) haven't had as much time for this as I used to. We're hoping to have it out soon, but no guarantees. Sorry about that.

Chapter 23

23.1

Flora sat cross-legged with her eyes closed at the edge of a pond. The trees around her cast her and the surface of the pond in a mottled pattern of light and shadow and the wind rustled through the leaves. Flora could feel the subtle not-quite humming feeling in the back of her mind. The feeling that came from the ring she now wore, the one that would always tell her where Techna's ring, and therefore Techna, was. It was a reassuring feeling.

Not that she really needed it right now, given that Techna had her feet in the pond and her head in Flora's lap as she fiddled with some unidentified contraption.

Flora smiled and ran her fingers through Techna's hair. She'd let it grow out a bit this loop so it came down past her shoulders, giving Flora just enough length to play with. "How did you end up with hair this color anyways?" Flora asked.

"Depends on the loop," Techna said. She didn't like to admit it, but Flora's fingers were rather soothing as they drifted through her hair. Another point against her attempts to convince Flora to give shorter hair a try, curses. "I think the most frequent explanation is genetic manipulation. My parents decided they wanted their kid to have magenta hair, so I ended up with magenta hair."

"What's the second most frequent explanation?" Flora asked.

"Lab accident," Techna said. "I or someone else gets careless working with some volatile magic and my hair ends up being one of the side effects."

"You've never had a loop where it was just dye?"

"A few. Remember that loop where I had black hair?"

"Oh, yes." Flora frowned. "You looked rather strange like that."

"Just a bit," Techna said. "The third most common explanation is an enchantment or permanent dye, by the way."

"What about hub loops?" Flora asked.

"Ah," Techna said. "That's dye. It's not always easy finding the right color either. Remember my hair was purple the one time?"

"I remember," Flora said. "That was a long time ago."

"I know," Techna said. "I think that was right after Bloom Awoke for the first time. I must have been... what, five thousand loops old at that point?"

"Something like that," Flora said. "We were so young back then."

"What's it been, a few hundred million years since then?"

"Something like that. I think I might be a billion at this point."

"And you still don't look a day over twenty," Techna remarked. "Our lives are strange."

"We're loopers," Flora said. "It's part of the job."

"Mmm," Techna hummed in agreement. "You know everyone is going to want to know what we did on our honeymoon, right?"

"I know," Flora said.

"What are we going to tell them?"

"What do you want to tell them?"

"I asked you first."

"You are not ten, Techna," Flora said. "That is not a valid argument."

"And you're dodging the question," Techna countered.

"I am," Flora admitted freely.

"You don't really want to tell them about it, do you?"

"Not really," Flora said. "They wouldn't believe us if we told them anyways."

"Probably not," Techna said. "It was a nice honeymoon though."

"It was," Flora said. "They're going to try to guess what we did."

"They'll never get it," Techna said.

"It might be fun to watch though."

"Probably."

"Do you want to keep them guessing?"

"Do you?"

"I asked you first."

"You're not ten, Flora."

Flora smiled. "No I'm not." She bent over and kissed Techna. "Let's keep them guessing."

"Sounds like fun," Techna said.

23.2 (Evilhumour)

"Ah Tim, itz good to sees you," Warboss Flora waved at Timmy with the massive looming figures of the rest girls, as Orks once more, caused the tech priest to look and sigh, wondering how the hell he was going to swing *this* one around as Cain wasn't Awake.

"Hi ladies, how are you this loop?" he asked carefully, his mechanized mind working on stabilizing this generator he was tinkering with.

"We're Orkz again," Bloom groaned, dropping her massive rocket launcher to the floor. "Don't know why wez loops in as Orks so often..."

"Makes perfect sense to me, actually," Timmy said absently observing them through some hidden optics he had installed in the back of his head as he fine tuned the machine he was working on. "I mean, do fairies or orks get their abilities through a subconscious power that derives from what their minds tells them is true or not?"

"Wait, are you saying..." Bloom said with horror creeping into her voice.

"From an abstract view point, there is very little different between fairies and orks," Timmy said as he finished storing enough power into the device before him. "Well, it has been nice but I *do* have others things to attend to so...bye!" With that, the adept from Mars hit the teleportation device and fled the scene before his friends could voice their opinions on his theory.

23.3 (Awesomedude17)

Flora fanned herself as Stella plopped onto a nearby chair, groaning.

"Friendly Trix?" Stella asked.

"Yep." Flora replied.

"What happened?"

"Set fire to the sun."

"How?"

"Dunno."

"Can we fix it?"

"Unlikely."

"Looks like sweat and split ends for the rest of the Loop."

"Mmm... So hot." Flora wiped her brow.

"Understatement... Ooooh." Stella moaned.

23.4

The Winx stood at the edge of the tunnel that led to Shadowhaunt's cavern. Bloom leaned over the edge and looked into the pit. "What do you suppose is down there?"

"Hell?" Techna suggested.

"Death?" Musa offered.

"Destruction?" Aisha added.

"Dust bunnies," Flora said. The other five turned to look at her. "What? I was bored, and I decided to check. It's dust bunnies."

"Dust bunnies," Stella deadpanned. "You mean to say that underneath the floating castle that is the source of all evil in the world, there's a giant pit of dust bunnies."

"Pretty much," Flora said.

Stella turned to the rest of the group. "I told you! I told you dust bunnies were evil!"

"Let's just go deal with Darkar," Bloom sighed.

23.5 (Awesomedude17)

"No running away now, Darkar. It was you who tried to steal the Dragon's fire, not Flora!" The attorney pointed at the dark monster dramatically.

Darkar growled in rage. How dare he? He was the Prince of Darkness! The Shadow Phoenix! The Incarnation of Evil! He roared as he absorbed all the light in courtroom he was it, turning it into a pitch black room. The light suddenly returned, revealing a withered husk that was Darkar, who promptly collapsed onto the ground.

"Thanks Mr. Wright. I knew I could count on you." Bloom said.

"Actually, this Loop I'm Ryūichi Naruhodō. Yggdrasil tends to flip a coin on whether I'm American or Japanese. Sometimes I'm French. It's weird like that."

"I get it. I tend to speak Italian without thinking about it on occasion."

"I know that feeling. At least your names are consistent. I have at least three different names to remember." Naruhodō sweated.

"At least you're not Elvin Gadd. He has like... 50 different names across Yggdrasil."

"Oh... That's got to be a headache."

"Eh, it probably doesn't help that he's senile." Bloom sighed.

Silence.

"Yggdrasil's got a weird sense of humor." Naruhodō eventually said.

"You just figured it out?"

"No. I've known. It's just that nobody else can complain."

"...Gotcha."

23.6

"Zombies? Really?" Darcy asked as she snapped her fingers. Rays of dark energy tore into a wall of shamblers.

"Not even interesting zombies!" Stormy said. "All they do is moan and walk! Where's the fun?"

"Is this really the best your loop has to offer?" Icy asked.

"Um... Yes?" Rick Grimes offered.

"Boring!" the frost witch declared. "Sisters, we're taking over!"

"About time," Darcy said. "Playing goody goody with the fairies was getting boring."

"Yeah, but you *like* the fairies," Icy said.

"That doesn't mean I don't still feel the occasional urge to conquer the world," Darcy said. "Though if the zombies are all this loop has to offer, I'm not even sure it"ll be worth the effort."

"We can still have fun blowing them up!" Stormy said.

"I suppose that works," Icy said. "Alright, no point in wasting time. Let's take over the world!"

The three witches took off, leaving Rick to consider the future of this loop. He wasn't sure if three sadistic teenage girls conquering the world would be an improvement or a big improvement. Oh well, at least he could rest easy for this loop.

23.7 (Awesomedude17)

Crap. Was Bloom's thought as Valtor transformed into his demon form. He then attempted to throw a fireball at her, which she dodged.

As if it was some sick joke, said fireball was even more powerful than Baseline, easily vaporizing several kilometers of stone.

"With my power I shall-"

" **RAAAAAGH!"**

Bloom looked towards the devastation and wondered what caused that noise. Said wondering was soon answered as something big and green landed between the two.

"You hurt Hulk. You make Hulk mad! HULK SMASH!"

The Hulk then grabbed Valtor by the leg and began to smash, repeatedly.

SMASH SMASH SMASH SMASH SMASH SMASH SMASH SMASH SMASH

"Oooooh..." Valtor moaned as he changed back to his mortal form.

SMASH SMASH STOMP

The Hulk, now done smashing Valtor, who was now embedded into the ground, began to wander off.

Where did Hulk come from, and why was he in Magix?

"YOU CALL THIS A CARAMEL MACCHIATO!?"

"Yes, we do."

"THAN I SHALL... NOT TIP THEE! FAREWELL!" Thor promptly tossed the latte away and stomped off with a huff, only to see that something hit the general area where Hulk was waiting.

"DOTH FATE HATE ME!?"

23.8

Bloom Awoke a bit earlier than usual. In her backyard to be exact, in the wake of the fight with the troll.

"These are-" Stella began, gesturing to the four boys on her back lawn.

"Hi Timmy, hi Riven," Bloom said. "Hello Brandon. Sky."

"How does she know our names?" Sky asked.

"I'm more interested in how she knows you're Sky," Brandon said.

"Bloom!" Stella said. "We just woke up and you're already blowing our cover!"

"You could have at least waited until Alfea," Timmy said.

"Sorry guys, but I just went through a Twilight loop," Bloom said. "I just do not care right now."

"Oh, ouch," Stella said. "How bad?"

"I was replacing Edward," Bloom said, her voice completely flat.

Timmy and Stella both winced. "Okay, that's fair," Stella said. "You wanna take this loop off?"

"Probably. Flora can handle it," Bloom said. She paused, then turned to Sky. "And before you even start, no, I am not going to date you this time around. Go marry Diaspro, because I do not have the patience for that bit of drama right now."

Sky blinked in stunned surprise. "Um... Could you maybe explain what's going on?"

"Timmy, do you want to do the honors?" Bloom asked. "Right now I just want to go to Alfea and sleep in my bed."

"Does this have anything to do with how this is the second time I've been here?" Brandon asked.

There was a moment of silence as everyone turned to look at Brandon.

"Second time?" Sky asked.

"Well, sort of," Brandon said. "I mean, I remember us doing this before, though Bloom was less cranky."

"Schnookums?" Stella asked. "Is that... Is that you?"

"You remember too, Honeybunches?" Brandon asked.

"Schnookums!" Stella squealed, tackling the brown haired specialist with a hug. "Schnookums! I've missed you so much!"

"Whoa, no need to worry, Princess, I'm right here," Brandon said.

"Well that was... enthusiastic," Sky said as the reunited couple turned into a mess of desperate kisses and meaningless mutterings.

"She's been waiting for hundreds of millions of years for this," Bloom said. "I don't blame her. And don't expect the same treatment when you finally Awake. You and I have some issues to discuss before I'm ready to forgive you."

"Um... I don't..."

"I'll explain everything when we get back to Red Fountain," Timmy said. He turned to Riven. "You're being awfully quiet."

"Yeah, well maybe I don't have anything I want to say right now," Riven snapped back.

"Really?" Bloom asked. "No comment on the fact that two of your friends changed names, two of them are time travelers, and the two fairies you came here to rescue are also time travelers. No comment at all?"

"Nothing I want to say," Riven said.

"One of these days I need to ask Musa what she sees in you," Bloom said, shaking her head. "Well, saw in you, given that she's dating Darcy now. Though I'm not sure what Musa sees in *her* either. Actually, I'm not sure I want to know, given how messed up that whole romantic *scene* is."

"You really are cranky, aren't you?" Timmy asked. "Twilight really that bad?"

"I should have crashed the stupid loop the moment it started," Bloom said.

"You know how the Admins are about that," Timmy warned.

"Fand lets us get away with it for the really nasty loops," Bloom said. "Flora says it's because we do a good job of not crashing the normal loops."

"You could still have gotten sent to Eiken by Twilight's admin."

"Fenrir's a nice guy, or wolf I guess," Bloom said. "I probably could have gotten away with it."

"Well you can crash it next time," Timmy said.

"I simultaneously hate you for reminding me that there will be a next time and vaguely like you for reminding me that I will be able to crash it next time."

"If you need the ambiguity resolved, I can always revisit my Ork-Fairy thesis," Timmy said. "I've been working on it in my off time. The current version is nearly a hundred pages long."

"And now I just hate you," Bloom said.

"Ambiguity resolved," Timmy said. "So, how much longer until they come up for air?" He hooked his thumb in the direction of Stella and Brandon.

"I'd give it another five minutes," Bloom said. "No wait, Stella's involved. Make it ten."

"So, um, we dated?" Sky asked. "Will date? Will have dated?"

"Past tense for me, future tense for you," Bloom said. "And it's not happening this time around. I am not dealing with the drama."

"Drama?"

"I discovered your real name and your fiance on the same day," Bloom said. "After we'd been dating for a while. And no, you didn't tell me. I found out from your fiance." Sky winced. "After that we were okay for a bit, even made it through a full year without an issue from your end, though I suppose getting possessed was bad form on my part. And then the next year you get hit with a love potion when your fiance tried to take you back, which I only sort of blame her for at this point. The year after that we had some fun fights, and then everything gets weird as your fiance goes from being a convicted traitor to being a government official. Of course that probably only happened because our universe is damaged. Oh, and you got amnesia because of a stupid locket thing. Timmy, did I leave anything out?"

"A few details, but nothing important," Timmy said. "There's the whole bit where Diaspro went from a government official back to being a traitor, but I don't think that really had much impact on your relationship with Sky."

"Thanks, Timmy," Bloom said. "So yeah. After dealing with sparkly vampire idiocy for the last few years, I am in no mood to deal with that kind of drama."

"Okay," Sky said. "Got it."

"Good," Bloom said. "And I will be having this conversation again with you when you finally Awaken. I very much hope the looping version of you has better answers for his behavior than you usually do."

"Got it," Sky squeaked.

"I still don't get why any version of him ever thought it was a good idea to play you," Timmy said. "If my girlfriend had the power to alter reality, I'd be honest with her."

"I know, right?" Bloom said. "And hey, I know Techna didn't work out for you, but I'm sure you'll find someone."

"Thanks, Bloom," Timmy said.

"Well, Stella and Brandon should be wrapping up any minute now," Bloom said, glancing over to where the couple was just hugging it out at this point. "I know you guys have to get back to Red Fountain, but we'll see you around."

"Uh, yeah, see you around," Sky said.

"You too, Riven," Bloom said. "See you later. If Musa isn't Awake, I might give you some tips on how to not make her angry." Riven just glared. Bloom shrugged. "Well alright then."

She glanced over to where Stella and Brandon were finally separating. So, Brandon was looping now. About time Timmy had some company over at Red Fountain. And well past time for Stella to be reunited with her "Schnookums". Yes, this was definitely a good thing.

Riven just glared.

23.9 (lord Martiya)

Flora and Bloom, the only members of the Winx Awake that Loop, had infiltrated Cloud Tower to meet the Trix. Or, rather, the Loopers that had been disguised as them. Because when Unawake the Trix were not able to pull what had happened the previous night at Alfea's ball, not without being Friendly.

And as expected entering the Trix' room they met not the three witches, but Minako Aino, Irma Lair, and an unknown aqua-haired girl playing cards.

"Two of the biggest pranksters of Yggdrasil… Should have seen it coming." said Flora.

"Two of the biggest pranksters of Yggdrasil and the biggest of all." the unknown girl corrected. "Hi, I'm Michiru Kaioh, also known as Sailor Neptune. And Naruto still has to prank back."

"Liked our prank yesterday?" Minako asked with a grin.

"YOU CALL THAT A PRANK?!" shouted Bloom. "That was living cannibal soup with a bad German accent!"

"Living FAIRY AND MAN-EATING soup with a bad German accent." Irma pointed out. "Had it been cannibal it would have fed on other soup."

After Bloom calmed down without setting the school on fire, Irma asked if Flora and Tecna had liked the wedding present.

"Yes. Those anti-materiel railguns were quite interesting…" Flora admitted.

"Railguns? Not something that exploded or caused immense humiliation?" Bloom interjected.

"EF-101 anti-materiel railgun, standard EarthForce issue." Irma explained.

"I couldn't sleep in fear of what it was! I thought it was a prank, and-You did that on purpose."

Minako and Irma started rolling on the floor laughing, while Michiru just gave a soft laugh at the fuming Bloom.

"Speaking of wedding presents, I wished to ask you a question…" Flora started, trying to keep the pranksters from driving Bloom to explode.

"The Fire Buster II? It was from Minako, my beloved and me." Michiru admitted. "As the oldest same-sex couple among the Loopers, Haruka and I can't help but celebrate whenever someone marry."

"I know. But exactly, who delivered it?"

"He asked us to keep it secret, I'm sorry."

"All we can say is that he's not too bright when it comes to love lives, and seriously need a good therapist." Minako added. "Seriously, don't you have some?"

"We only have Darcy and Lightrock."

"Damn…"

"What are you planning to do next?" Bloom asked, wary of the three pranksters.

"Sing and fight for truth, justice, and the Love way, of course."

"No pranks, I had my satisfaction this Loop." Michiru said.

"Deal with your villains, obviously." Irma declared. "Starting from drowning Tritannus."

"But-He can breath underwater!"

Irma only smiled.

23.10

CLANG!

CLANG!

CLANG!

"Ow!"

"Point for me. Wanna take a break?"

"Sure."

The two demigods retired to the edge of the arena for some water.

"So, not to be rude, but how do you even *lift* that thing?" Percy Jackson asked.

"This?" Brandon asked, patting the enormous greatsword he was using. "This is nothing. My Phanto-Blade's even bigger."

"Isn't that like a lightsaber?" Percy asked. "Does it even have weight?"

"Sort of," Brandon said. "It doesn't weigh much when it's turned off, but it weighs as much as a normal sword when it's on."

"Ah, magic," Percy said.

"Pretty much," Brandon said. "That's just how we roll."

"Dude, don't try using our slang," Percy said. "It does not work for you. Does not."

"Got it," Brandon said.

"So, explanation for what this loop made you?" Percy asked. "I mean I know Hera and Ares are mother and son, but that doesn't mean she likes his kids. Even weirder is Aphrodite agreeing with her."

"Not sure," Brandon said. "I mean the whole Son of Ares thing makes sense. I'm the strongest of the Specialists. Um, I mean in terms of actual strength. Sky and Riven are better fighters."

"You're the strongest? Really? No kidding!" Percy said. "Is that why you use barn door for a sword?"

"It's not that big," Brandon said. "So the Son of Ares thing makes sense. I have no idea why Hera and Aphrodite like me though."

"Eh, I guess there's no accounting for gods," Percy said. "Wanna go another round?"

"Sure, let me grab the spear this time," Brandon said.

23.11

"Greetings, time walker," the creature said.

"So you know what I am," Flora said.

"The truth is there for those who know to look for it," the creature said, its humanoid avatar smiling gently.

"Then you won't mind if I call you by your name, will you?" Flora asked.

"If you wish to call me Lorien, you may do so," the immortal said.

"Then you may call me Flora," Flora said.

"May I ask what you intend to do here?" Lorien asked.

"Continue living on this station," she replied. "Please, sit." She gestured to the dining section of her quarters.

"A rather simple lifestyle for one so powerful," Lorien said, taking the offered chair.

"Says the immortal energy being that's been living in a cave for billions of years," Flora said, taking the chair opposite.

"An excellent point," Lorien said. "For what reason have you asked me here?"

"I wanted to talk to you," Flora said. "I don't get to meet many people that are older than me that aren't loopers. I was curious."

"For what purpose?" Lorien asked. "Do you wish to learn more of others, or more of yourself?"

"I imagine they're rather the same," Flora said.

Lorien smiled. "Clever of you to realize this," he said. "By learning of ourselves, we learn to understand others, and by learning of others, we learn to understand ourselves. They do not understand. They did, once."

"Who are you, and what do you want," Flora said. "The two questions."

"Yes," Lorien said. "The first is built upon the past and defines the present. The second also defines the present and is the foundation upon which the future is built. Neither holds meaning without the other."

Flora nodded and poured herself some tea from the thermos on the table, then lifted her mug to drink.

"Existence has been cruel to you," Lorien said abruptly.

Flora paused. "Oh?"

"It has shattered your illusions," he said. "The shortness of your life is one of the greatest gifts the universe has given. It allows you to maintain the illusion of immortality."

"Illusion of immortality," Flora said, putting her mug down. "The belief that anything can last forever?"

"Yes," Lorien said. "Nothing is eternal. Not life. Not friendship. Not love. Before you were made immortal by misfortune, this reality was hidden from you. Your time loops are one of the greatest cruelties I have ever witnessed."

"Maybe," Flora said. "I've heard sentiments like that before. Stand in the ashes of trillion dead souls and ask the ghosts if honor matters. Life is cruel. Why should the afterlife be any different? Different words, certainly, but all of them with the same meaning."

"And yet you disagree," Lorien said.

"I do," Flora said. "Would you say that love exists?"

"I can hardly deny it," Lorien said.

"Then show me," Flora said. "Show me an atom, a molecule, an ounce of love. Show me love's physical form."

"It does not have one," Lorien said.

"Yet it exists," Flora said. "It exists because we believe it does."

"I see," Lorien said. "You believe that it can last forever, and because of its nature your beliefs impose themselves upon its existence."

"Precisely," Flora said. "Things that aren't real only stop existing when we stop believing in them. And I refuse to stop believing."

"And in so doing, you prove me wrong," Lorien said, gently rubbing at his avatar's beard. "You are quite wise for one so young."

"I'm over a billion years old," Flora said. "I haven't been young for quite a while."

"Perhaps," Lorien said. "The next time you are here, I imagine that I would enjoy speaking with you again."

"You won't remember this conversation," Flora warned.

"Then I shall have the pleasure of experiencing it again," Lorien said.

"Alright then," Flora said. "Next time I'm here, we can talk again."

"Thank you," Lorien said. "Perhaps existence is less cruel in its decision to grant you eternity than I had imagined."

"I like to think so," Flora said.

Adminspace (Awesomedude17)

Fand tilted her head in mild bemusement.

"Huh. Wasn't expecting this, period."

"What are you talking about?" Tama asked, hopping up to the terminal.

"Well, my Calico kitty companion, it would appear that Musa and Darcy are dating."

"And? We know what kind of fairy you are."

"I know, but I honestly wasn't shipping them until they up and decided to go out. I must have missed this while I was stuck in the fridge again."

"Wait? You mean you weren't shipping them?"

"No. Why do you-"

"AHHHHHHHHHHHH! IT'S MADNESS! RUN AWAAAAAAAAAAAAY!" Tama scurried off, leaving the fairy even more bemused.

"I don't ship everyone..." She pouted.

23.1: Why yes, they are trolling. What was your first clue?

23.2: Well he's not *wrong.*

23.3: Compiler's brain has crashed due to his inner nerd going into convulsions at the atrocious science of this snip.

23.4: Dust bunnies. Who knew?

23.5: Putting the villains on trial? I suppose that could work. Especially when your attorney can kick butt with the best of them.

23.6: Some places are better off under the oppressive reign of the Trix. Not many, but some.

23.7: Puny Demon.

23.8: That was supposed to be about Stella and Brandon, not Bloom. Oops.

23.9: I question the sanity of the pranks depicted here...

23.10: Seriously, what is that sword? It's enormous!

23.11: I may have been reading a bit too much Terry Pratchet lately.

Adminspace: This is what happens when you have a reputation.

Chapter 24

24.1 (Awesomedude17)

"Rick Sanchez." Faragonda said with extreme displeasure.

"Hey, Farag*urrr*nda. Sorry for making Techna do that thing, not."

"Five of my students cannot forget that song now and the number's rising. There's a reason you were given persona non grata 30 years ago."

"And as you can clearly see, I don't give a shit. At least works."

"And that brings me to why."

"Because it's funny. And let me explain why."

"wordbird dot exe activated."

"Techna?"

Techna's mouth opened and suddenly the air filled with the sounds of Surfin' Bird by the Trashmen.

"-the bird's the word... it's an awesome song. It's awesome. It's awesome."

Faragonda glared at Rick.

"...Is this about Tahiti? It turned out to be a false positive. Forgot about-" Rick defended himself.

"OUT!"

Rick promptly ran off.

24.2

"No."

"yOu CAn't MakE ME," the eldritch... thing, said.

"I don't care," Flora said. "I said no. You are not using my loop to plant your newest virus."

"tRY tO stOp mE!" Cthulhu said. "BY tHe wAY, HoW dID yOu FinD mE?"

"You are outside the boundaries of nature," Flora said. "The moment you dropped your avatar into my loop, I knew exactly where you were. You're like this great big blind spot in my view of the world."

"FiDDlestIcKS," Cthulhu said. "i'M StiLL dePLOying mY VirUs."

"Don't even try it," Flora said, taking a seat in the air and crossing her legs.

"WhY NOt?" Cthulhu demanded. "fAnD wON't bE bACk fRoM LUnCh fOR SEVerAl MORe looPS, aND tHAt looPER wiTh ADminISTRAtor ACCess isN't AwAKe!"

"Bloom doesn't have Administrator access," Flora said. "The Great Dragon does. I think."

"anD yoU CAn'T sUMMon HEr!" Cthulhu said. He... it, pulled out a putrid looking pod from its avatar's pockets and placed it on the road. He tapped it and it opened. "depLOying VIruS!"

There was moment of silence as the the pod thing glowed, then dimmed. Nothing happened. A minute passed. Five. Ten.

"anY MOMenT NOw..." Cthulhu said.

"I wouldn't count on it," Flora said, idly checking her nails.

"WhAT dId YOu dO?" Cthulhu demanded.

"Nothing much," Flora said. "I just called in an Admin."

"hOW?"

"You'd be amazed at how much you can get done when you cooperate with your Admin," Flora said. "Fand set this up ages ago, just in case. If something really problematic is going on in my loop, all I have to do is hit a button."

A woman with flowing blonde hair materialized in a cascade of pixels. She turned and glared at Cthulhu. "You. Out."

"YEs mA'aM," Cthulhu said.

"And don't think I won't be telling Nemesis about this," the woman said. Cthulhu vanished with alacrity and the woman turned to Flora.

"Thank you for responding so quickly," Flora said, bowing slightly. "Um..."

"My name is Frigg," the Admin said. "I'm in the office next to Fand's."

"Ah," Flora said. "Thank you for coming, Frigg." She pointed at the pod. "That's the virus thing."

"So you're Fand's Anchor," Frigg said as she encased the pod in code and deleted it. "I'd heard you were responsible."

"I try my best," Flora said modestly. "Is there anything you need?"

"No," Frigg said. "How long have you had that alert?"

"Um," Flora said, putting her finger against her chin. "Shortly after the expansion, I think? Yeah, that sounds right. Fand said the

corrupted timelines meant that this was a good place to insert a virus because it's harder to catch."

"You've had it that long, and you've never used it before?" Frigg asked.

"No?" Flora said, vaguely perplexed. "It's only supposed to be used for things that we can't deal with. Like the hacker."

"Why does *Fand* get the responsible Anchor?" Frigg growled, shaking her head. "I can see this loop is in good hands. With luck, I won't see you again."

"Tell Fand I said hello, please," Flora asked.

"Sure," Frigg said. "Farewell." She vanished in an explosion of code.

"Now, where was I?" Flora asked herself. She spun and grabbed Anagan by the fist a split second before he punched her. "Oh, right. You." Her eyes turned red as she jumped back into the fight.

24.3

"Hello!" Slaanesh said cheerfully.

"Oh great, *this* again," Flora said, gathering her vague body of decay and disease and reforming it into a dryad-like avatar. "Why do *I* show up as a Chaos God? Ess. Goddess. Why me?"

"Your fault for having a compatible power set, dearie," Slaanesh said. "By the way, you might want to let Isha go before Tzeentch decides to come after you."

"Is he not awake this loop?" Flora asked.

"Oh no, he's quite mad this loop," Slaanesh said. "In both senses of the word."

"Great," Flora said, rubbing her head. "Have I mentioned that I hate your loop? Even when I'm an Ork?"

"Oh but Flora, I do so love having you around," Slaanesh leered.

"Two steps back, deity," Flora said warningly. "I'm married."

"Oh you're no fun," Slaanesh said.

"I'm *sane* ," Flora said. "And I'd like to keep it that way."

"Like I said, no fun."

"I've seen your idea of fun," Flora said. "It's the reason I now buy Industrial Strength Brain Bleach."

"Feh," Slaanesh said. "What are you going to do with your cultists this loop?"

"Let's start with 'not give them Tuberculosis' and go from there," Flora said.

"Why do we have Nurglites running our Agri-worlds?" Ciaphas Cain complained.

"Because they're good at it," Amberly Vail said. "Seriously, they've been doing this for thousands of years. Why are you so confused by this?"

"Oh right, forgot you're not Awake," Ciaphas said.

"What?"

"Nothing, just ignore me," Ciaphas said.

"Whatever," Amberly said. "Besides, they haven't called themselves Nurglites in millennia."

Ciaphas accessed his loop memories, then groaned. "Oh you've got to be kidding me."

"Sorry, no," a voice from behind them said as one of the Chaos Goddess of Nature's Dryads appeared from the ground. The bark covering her torso and thighs made an interesting contrast with her green skin. "Don't you have somewhere you're supposed to be, Cain?"

"Oh no, I'm staying right here," Ciaphas said. "I am not doing the hero thing this time around. I am on *vacation* dammit."

"Oh," the Dryad said. "Well, since you're here, we could use your help with the Necron Tomb we've found."

Ciaphas stared at the Dryad for a moment. Then he threw his hands in the air. "Sure. Why not. Because this is my life."

"That's the spirit," the Dryad said.

24.4 (Awesomedude17)

Sokka took a deep breath and smiled.

"Welcome to my branch, Aisha."

"Thanks Sokka. So tell me, who did I replace?"

"My sister, Katara."

"Any special abilities?"

"She's a waterbender."

"Really? Neat! I can't wait to use it. I mean, I've never controlled... water... before..."

"Aisha?"

"AAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRGH! I'M A STUPID DOO-DOO BRAIN!" Aisha banged her head against the wall until blood began to appear, and then continued on for another thirty minutes for good measure.

After she was done, she wiped the wounds with her arm, and fell onto her bottom.

"Let's me guess, you had water powers?"

"My Morphix is connected to the ocean. Why didn't I think to use water attacks? ... I think I got a concussion."

Sokka sighed. "Let's get you patched up."

24.5

Brandon charged across the bizarre platform in the sky, swinging with his sword. The man in green caught the devastating blows on his shield before lashing out with his own sword. Brandon jumped backwards, shifting his sword to his left hand as he pulled out his spear with the other. A quick toss and the double-ended phanto-spear spun through the air like a boomerang. The man in green hurled his own boomerang and the two weapons clashed before returning to their masters.

The man in green rushed forward, his sword flashing. Brandon ducked under the slash and grabbed his enemy by the tunic before spinning and hurling him away. The green clad man flew through the air, spinning to land on his feet. Brandon raised his sword and brought it down on the ground with a two-handed slam. A rift opened in the ground and the man in green fell in, getting trapped. Brandon rushed forward and with a powerful blow from his sword, the man was sent hurtling off the platform.

Brandon's relief was short lived as the man righted himself, jumped off of absolutely nothing, and spun like a top to come to a rest in a

three point stance. A second later and Brandon ducked as an arrow whistled past his ear. The boomerang followed, striking Brandon and knocking him off balance long enough for a bomb to hit him and explode on contact. He flew back, skidding along the ground before jumping to his feet.

The man in green closed in with a rush, sword swinging. Brandon parried the first two strikes, then kicked out at his attacker, sending him flying. The man got to his feet and the two fighters stared at each other, each waiting for an opening. The green man twitched first, moving to strike, and Brandon punished the opening the motion left with a quick throw of his spear. It struck the man before returning to Brandon's hand and the Specialist moved to take advantage of the opening. He swept upwards with his sword, carrying both of them into the air. At the apex of the sword enhanced uppercut, Brandon pulled back and brought his sword around in a devastating overhead chop that struck the man in green. The man flew downwards, bounced off of the platform, and vanished into the distance as Brandon dropped to the ground.

Brandon turned to see his ally, a... Man? Woman? Person? in an armored suit of red and gold brawling with a giant turtle. His Windrider appeared from nowhere and he jumped on it before setting a direct course for the turtle. He rammed the bike into the fire breathing reptile, distracting it just long enough for his armored ally to blast the turtle with a giant ball of energy, hurling it off the platform.

There was a moment of silence.

"Nice shot," Brandon said, trying to break the ice.

The figure's helmet disappeared with a hologram-like effect, revealing a woman's face. "Your skills are decent as well..."

"Brandon," he said.

"Samus Aran," the gold-clad warrior said.

"So, um, where are we? Because this place is kind of... loopy," Brandon said.

"I'm feeling quite Anchored myself," Samus said. "To answer your question, this is the Smash Tournament. It's a fused loop that likes to pull in fighters from all over the Nintendo Cluster, though it occasionally picks up outsiders such as yourself. Where are you from?"

"Winx," Brandon said. "Flora say's we're neighbors with the Nickelodeon Cluster."

"Ah," Samus said. "I'm afraid I've never met anyone from your world before."

"First time for everything," Brandon said. "So, um, what are we supposed to be doing here?"

"Fight," Samus said. "It's a fighting tournament. There's no real baseline most of the time, and this isn't one of the exceptions."

"Oh," Brandon said. "Okay then. When's the next match start?"

Samus's lips quirked up slightly. "Now."

There was a flash and Brandon found himself standing next to Samus, who was now wearing a skintight blue jumpsuit and holding a pistol. Beneath him, a spaceship rumbled through the sky. Further back along the hull were a pink puffball and a woman with grey hair and sword that looked like a chainsaw. Brandon raised his sword and prepared for battle.

24.6

"Ah, good old hub loops," Musa said. "Are we all here?"

"Yes Musa," Techna said. "That's why we have an reservation for twelve people. Who did you think we were missing?"

"Huh," Musa said. "Not sure, but I feel like there's someone else who should be here."

"Just take your seat," Techna said, pointing to the chair to the left of Darcy's. To Darcy's right sat Icy, who was in turn flanked by Stormy who was chatting with Timmy. Roxy sat at the end with Bloom to her right. Flora sat next to Bloom, pulling out the chair next to her for her wife. This had the awkward result of placing Techna across from Icy, but there were worse fates. To her right sat Brandon with Stella finishing off their side of the tables. Aisha took the open seat at the end.

The waiter approached and took their orders before retreating.

"So, what are everyone's plans for the loop?" Flora asked.

"Racing circuit," Darcy said immediately.

"Meteorology," Stormy said.

"Robotics," Timmy said.

"Med school for me," Aisha said.

"I'm going to overturn the world of fashion," Stella said.

"Again, Honeybunches?" Brandon asked.

"Of course!" Stella said.

"Well that answers where Brandon's going too," Roxy said. "I was thinking I'd try to set up my own smoothie and music bar. See what it's like being the boss for once."

"I think I might join you," Bloom said. "Unless you mind?"

"Nope, I already know you know the job!" Roxy said with a laugh.

"I think I'll stick to composing this loop," Musa said. "Maybe I'll get to see those so-called singers butcher my music."

"Be nice," Flora chided.

"What about you and Tech?" Bloom asked.

"I want to try my hand at being an author," Techna said.

"An author?" Aisha asked. "Aren't you worried that you'll accidentally create a new branch of Yggdrasil or something?"

"Probably not," Techna said. "Though I guess it could be interesting to meet your characters."

"And you, Flora?" Roxy asked.

"Photography, I think," Flora said. "What about you Icy?"

"Astrophysics," Icy said bluntly. There was a moment of silence as everyone at the table tried to figure out the reasoning behind this decision and failed.

"So, who's seen our new expansion?" Bloom asked.

"I'm not sure it's an expansion," Techna said. "I think it's actually a variant."

"Techna, you know how screwed up our timeline is," Timmy said. "Everything's a variant."

"The new transformation looks interesting," Stella said.

"It looks like it's got a lot to do with crystals," Roxy said. "What was it called again? Dreamix?"

"Yep," Aisha said. "And I have to say, wow. Very slinky nightclub style."

"I think I'll pass," Techna said. "I like Enchantix."

"I don't know," Flora said. "I can think of a few fun things to do with that outfit."

"Flora!" Techna said, swatting her wife.

"Moving on," Bloom said. "Does anyone feel like watching the new stuff with me? I know it doesn't really match up to actually living through it, but it could be interesting."

"I'd be up for it," Musa said.

"Maybe some other time," Flora said. "Though if you could pick up a copy for future reference?"

"No sweat," Bloom said.

"So, new transformation, huh?" Techna said as she and Flora made their way home.

"As long as it's not Butterflyix, I'm alright with it," Flora said.

"But you look so cute in that form!" Techna teased.

"I look like I'm two," Flora said. "I don't want to put the pixies out of a job."

"Fair enough," Techna said.

"Do you really plan on trying to become an author?" Flora asked.

"Why not?" Techna said. "It could be interesting."

"Alright then," Flora said. "Just don't go too crazy with it."

"Of course not," Techna said, bending down slightly to kiss Flora's cheek.

"You remember our first trip here?" Flora asked.

"Not really," Techna said. "I was so young back then. I probably still have my diary from that time though."

"Oh that's right, you kept a diary," Flora said. "I'd forgotten. You were so curious about baseline back then."

"Well, baseline turned out to be boring," Techna said.

"I agree," Flora said, rubbing the ring on her finger. "So, how about we keep ignoring it?"

"Works for me," Techna said.

24.7 (Awesomedude17)

"You had to jinx it, didn't you?" Flora said.

"I'z jinxed it? Youz also da one 'oo jinxed it!" Ork Flora countered.

"To be fair," True Vampire Flora chipped in. "The Mikasa Glitch means we all jinxed it."

"Don't make me end you." Flurgle said with extraordinary annoyance.

"So we all agree this sucks?" Flora the Biotic asked.

"Aye!" The rest agreed.

"I am Flora!"

"Yes, let's also try to forget replacing Groot. It was really awkward..." True Vampire Flora scratched her head.

"Aye!"

24.8 (Awesomedude17)

Day 1

A man walked by Stella and Brandon. His general cheerfulness had already rubbed off on the two.

"Something about that guy certainly makes an impact." Brandon remarked.

"Yeah."

Day 2

The man walked by Stella and Brandon again. Once again, it's made clear that his cheerfulness is rubbing off on the two.

"I wonder what got his spirits up?" Stella asked.

"Probably got a promotion or something."

"I guess."

Day 3

The man walked by again. However, something felt off.

"Brandon, is something off about him?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about, Stella."

Day 4

"Okay, I noticed something off now."

"Yeah... he's looking really pale."

Day 5

"Uhhhhhhh..." Brandon stared at the man, who began to look decayed.

"Uhhhhhhh sounds about right."

Day 6

"Brandon, I'm scared."

"Don't worry, I don't think he'll attack... I think..."

Day 7

"He's a zombie!" Brandon and Stella screeched, horrified at the decay of the man.

Day 8

No one knows what compelled Stella and Brandon to see the man again, but then came the answer when something expelled itself from his mouth. Brandon quickly caught what it was though.

"Stella, I think that was a robot wearing a guy's skin."

"... Damn Fazbears..." Stella rubbed her forehead.

"Mind explaining?"

"Sister Location. Some guy named Simmons went through the place."

"How bad was it?"

"Bonnie's his worst nightmare."

"The rabbit..." Brandon crossed his arms.

"I doubt you'll be thinking the same thing when you go find Camelot."

"Huh?"

Stella took out a DVD of 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail.'

"How about movie night to forget what we just saw?"

"Of course!"

The two went away, but didn't seem to notice that the man was getting up and walking away.

24.9

"You," Flora said, glaring at the figure across the desolate landscape. Bare earth glowed red in the light of the setting sun, the small rocks jutting out of the ground casting long shadows.

"I've waited for this," Dio said, cracking his knuckles. "No dragon. No rules. No one to stop me."

"I've beaten you before," Flora said. "I'm not afraid of you."

"You will be," Dio said. "You're going to learn to fear me again, just like everyone else!"

"You and what army?" Flora asked.

"This army," Dio said with a vicious smile. Behind Dio, his Pocket opened and figures started spilling out.

Flora stared in horror. "What have you done?" she breathed.

"Don't you recognize them?" Dio asked, gesturing to one of the figures. A zombified version of Commander Shepard's female form stared hungrily at the fairy. "I collect them."

"You're a monster," Flora said. She closed her eyes. "Enchantix." Her wings appeared in a flash of light. "I'm going to kill you, Dio."

"You can try," he said. "Attack!" The army of zombie loopers charged.

Flora charged to meet them.

A burst of fire rippled out from Flora's hand and took out a dozen undead Asami Satos. She spun and her body morphed into a mass of shadow as she leapt at a zombified Zoe Washbourne. Claws of shadows formed and took out the things wearing her friends' faces. Bullets hammered into her shadowy form and Flora coalesced back into a human. The Harkonen appeared in her hands and she fired the overpowered weapon at a collection of undead clones of Garrus, destroying them in the impact shockwave. She jumped into the air and called down lightning upon the army of Squirtle, frying the undead reptiles. She dropped to the ground again, leaving an explosion in her wake to take out the undead Rainbow Dashes trying to kill her. She hit the ground hard enough to create a crater, blasting the monsters away from her impact site.

"Is that all you've got, Dio?" Flora demanded. "Do you really think this is enough to beat me?"

"Not really," a familiar voice said from behind her.

Flora spun. And froze. She was face to face with Techna.

Who took a stake and drove it into Flora's chest. The Anchor staggered backward before falling to her knees in agony.

The undead copy of Techna stepped aside as Dio moved over to stand before Flora. "Hawthorn stake, tainted with cold iron and cursed by ancient dark magic," he said. "A weapon meant to kill you."

"Why?" Flora gasped. The stake was burning into her body. She couldn't pull it out, she couldn't even touch it, even as it went about destroying her from the inside out.

"Because," Dio said, grabbing her chin and lifting it up to look her in the eye. "You didn't fear me. I am power. I am fear. You will fear me, just like everyone else. You think you can order me around? Tell me what I can and cannot do? I hold your life in my hands. I can kill you whenever I choose. And there is no one who can save you now."

He was right, and Flora could feel it. She was powerful, but she couldn't fight against the object lodged in her body. It destroyed her very essence with its merest touch, burning through her. She was going to die.

"Sleep carefully, Flora Victoria," Dio said. "You never know where I might-"

Dio cut off as a bolt of lightning slammed into his chest, throwing him away from the fairy Anchor. A yellow rodent landed between him and the mortally wounded fairy.

"Get away from her," the creature said.

"You," Dio said.

"Me," Pikachu agreed. He spun and laid his paws on the girl. *"Teleport."*

The pair vanished.

Dio growled in frustration. Still, it didn't matter. They'd be back.

Pikachu quickly removed the stake from Flora's chest with a pair of tongs from his Pocket. A quick blast of fire turned the hateful object to ashes. It didn't heal her, but it did slow her dying. Her eyes fluttered as she collapsed onto her side.

"Hang in there kid," Pikachu said. *"Heal Pulse."* A pulse of energy washed over the fallen fairy, forcing the wound in her chest to close. Then it reopened, burning away from the inside. *"Of course. Heal BELL."* A chime rang out and the burning stopped. *"Let's try this again. Heal Pulse."* The wash of energy occurred again. This time the wound closed and stayed closed. The fairy's breathing stabilized and she rolled onto her back.

"Still unconscious," Pikachu muttered. *"Dio really did a number on you."* He pulled out what looked like six-pointed caltrop made of some yellow substance and a small cup. He crushed the caltrop into a powder in the cup, then pulled out a water bottle from his Pocket and poured in enough to turn the powder into a slurry. He tilted the fairy woman's head up and opened her mouth before pouring the slurry down her throat. She swallowed twice, then her eyes opened.

"Are you alright?" Pikachu asked.

"I'm fine," she said. "You rescued me?"

"Yes."

"Thank you," Flora said. "I'm Flora."

"And I'm Pikachu," he said. *"Are you up for round two?"*

Flora took a deep breath, then nodded. "Let's do this."

"I was wondering if you'd return," Dio said as the two Anchors appeared in a flash of light. He held another stake in his hand, identical to the one Pikachu had just removed from Flora's chest.

"I'll take the zombies," Pikachu said, sparks coming off his cheeks. *"You handle Dio."*

"You're sure?" Flora asked.

"He built this army to fight you. He wasn't expecting me."

"Got it," Flora said. Her fingers extended into claws and she kicked off the ground, rushing at Dio.

Pikachu rubbed his paws together as he observed the army around him. *"Let's do this."* And then he started glowing.

Flora slashed at Dio, driving him back before delivering a devastating sidekick to his chest. The MLE went flying, skipping across the earth as Flora drove him away from his army. Behind them, a cataclysm of energy showed where Pikachu was still fighting.

Flora spun in the air, shifting into her Enchantix form as she did so. The ground erupted as vines reached out and slammed Dio into the ground. The stake fell from his fingers and Flora dropped to the ground, pointing her fingers at the man.

Dio laughed.

"What's so funny?" Flora demanded.

"You are," Dio said. "Even if you kill me here, I've still won."

"You've won nothing," Flora said, magic pooling in her fingertips, begging to be released.

"Really?" Dio said. "Can you honestly say you won't be sleeping with one eye open from now on? Can you honestly say you have no fear of me? Because no matter what you say, no matter what lies you tell yourself, you know the truth. I have more of those things. I can kill you whenever I want. You will fear me. You should fear me. And that means I've won."

Flora opened her mouth, then closed it. She closed her eyes and clenched her fist. Dio's body collapsed into a black hole, then

vanished. The MLE was gone, for now.

"Are you alright?" Pikachu said, making his way towards the fairy girl across the devastated landscape.

"I'm fine," Flora said, sitting down with a thump. "Dio... said some things."

"Don't trust him," Pikachu said. *"He's a monster."*

Flora snorted. "Like we're ones to talk about being monsters. I'm a vampire too and you're literally a pocket monster."

"Monsters aren't defined by what they are," Pikachu said. *"They're defined by what they do. You seem like a good person."*

"Not as much as I used to be," Flora said with a weak smile. "Still, I guess I've come to terms with it."

"You fight to protect yourself and what you care about," Pikachu said. *"That's not always a clean process. Doesn't mean you shouldn't do it."*

"Thanks," Flora said. "You want to get something to eat?"

"Sure, you got any ketchup?"

Flora considered the spike of wood and iron which she'd carefully picked up with a pair of tongs. She still couldn't touch it without burning herself. She pulled out an isolation container from her pocket and gingerly placed the stake inside before closing it and turning the container's containment fields on. She lifted the container and placed it in her Pocket.

Next time, she'd be ready.

24.1: I'm fairly certain this loop's sole purpose was to troll me. Because apparently I am "the word". I can live with that.

24.2: Oh, the joys of cooperation.

24.3: Eyup. Sucks to be you, Ciaphas.

24.4: I can't be the only person who found that strange...

24.5: I actually worked out a basic Smash moveset for Brandon. Not much else to say about this loop though.

24.6: I have no idea what we're going to do about World of Winx. Probably cherry pick the interesting bits and leave the rest of it alone.

24.7: I can think of worse fates than looping in as Groot.

24.8: Um. Okay then. Are you creeped out? Because I'm totally not. Not me. Nope. No sir. Totally not creeped out over here.

24.9: Be afraid. Be very afraid.

Chapter 25

25.1 (Awesomedude17)

"Musa, Darcy, we need to talk." Bloom said plainly.

"What's the big deal? We were just showing our love for each other." Darcy said, feigning innocence.

"You made out with each other everywhere. Alfea, Cloudtower, Red Fountain, coffeehouses, restrooms, even in the kitchen sink. You're clearly doing this get a rise from some people."

Musa smiled with embarrassment.

"Oh, you're kidding me."

"It's not our fault homophobes are so easy to rile up and hurt when they try to attack us." Darcy shrugged with a smirk.

"Unbelievable." Bloom closed her eyes as she rubbed her forehead with her fingers. She heard some moaning and opened her eyes.

"Seriously?"

Musa broke the kiss. "What? Her lips are so awesome to play with."

"And her tongue is so flexible." Darcy gave a suggestive hum.

"Ugh, gag me with a spoon." Bloom rolled her eyes.

25.2 (Awesomedude17)

"FLORA. I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, AM PLEASED TO MEET YOU ONCE MORE."

"Thanks Papyrus. Where's Sans?"

"OH HIM... HE'S TALKING TO TECHNA."

"Techna..."

"No puns, Sans?" Techna asked.

"normally, no, but..."

"Man, the wifi here sucks." Jerry started.

"dang it jerry..." Sans moaned.

BRRRING BRRRING

"hey. papyrus we're near jerry and... papyrus?"

"SUPER ANNOYING SPAGHETTI EATER VERSION OF MARIO, THAT THING HAS STOLEN YOUR SPAGHETTI!" Papyrus shouted as he appeared out of nowhere with Flora and Mario in tow. Mario, in turn roared in fury as he tackled Jerry to the ground.

"yeesh... where'd you learn that, bro?"

"I HAVE FOUND THAT A FEW TREES AND THAT BOTTOMLESS SPAGHETTI BOWL FROM THE SCP FOUNDATION ALLOWS FOR THE EMERGENCY MEASURES TO BE KEPT UNTIL NEEDED. YOU'RE WELCOME SANS. NOW, ABOUT THAT SOCK..."

"still not moving it."

"DRAT!"

"Ah, brotherly love." Flora smirked.

"Shouldn't we stop that version of Mario from mauling Jerry?" Techna looked as the beatdown continued.

"It's Jerry. Who cares?"

25.3 (Awesomedude17)

"So let me get this straight... We're in a Safe-Mode Loop where disputes are settled by insulting your opponent into shameful sorrow..."

"Yep."

"And it's inspired by Monty Python."

"Also yes."

Flora rolled her eyes. "Could be worse."

Gordon made a double take. "Excuse me? Monty Python is awesome!"

"Perhaps, but living in something like Monty Python?"

"Well, Ma'am, let me reply by saying..."

SETTLE THIS!

"Your mother was a hamster and your father smells of elderberries!"

"You bother me and still use Windows Vista!"

25.4 (lord Martiya)

It had been a baseline. Just a nice and relaxing baseline, with only Bloom and Flora Awaken. And then, as Bloom and Musa were going shopping the day after the witches tried to lynch Musa...

"What did you just say?" Bloom asked.

"I asked Musa if she wants to help me rile out the new group of homophobes in town by making out right on their doorstep." Darcy replied, almost as if it was the most normal thing in the world.

"But-but-but-"

"Why me?" asked Musa, who had not forgotten what had happened just the day before. "In fact, why don't you use your illusions?"

"Because I know one of them, he'd see right through it." the witch answered. "As for why you... Well, obviously I can't ask my sisters, and you are aestetically pleasant and have a tolerable personality and good taste in boys."

Musa thought about it for a moment, then gave her answer: "I'm in."

"WHAT!" Bloom shouted. Then she realized. "I get it. Irma Lair... You're pranking me. But I got you!"

And with that Bloom cast a few illusion breakers. Twenty times before she realized that no, it wasn't one of her pranks. Then she fainted.

25.5

"Why don't you ever visit, Flora?" Miele asked.

"I'm sorry, Miele," Flora said. "I just have a lot going on."

"You didn't come back for the Day of the Rose," Miele said. "You didn't come back over break. You never come back." The little girl pouted. "It's like you don't want to see us anymore."

Flora nearly choked. "That's not true Miele. I love you."

"Then why don't you ever come home?" Miele asked. "Mom and dad are worried about you."

"I'm fine, Miele," Flora said. "I just... can't. I'm sorry."

"Yeah, I'm sorry too," Miele said, then hung up.

"What do I do?" Flora asked as she picked at her breakfast.

"Well what do you want?" Bloom asked.

"What I *want* is for Miele to start looping," Flora said. "But if she was going to start looping she probably would have done so by now, and even if she does start looping eventually, that doesn't fix the problem right now."

"Then how do you want to deal with the current problem?" Techna asked.

"I don't know," Flora said, poking at her oatmeal with her spoon. "I don't want to lose Miele again. I don't get to talk to her enough. But I also don't want to visit my home. You know what the loops do to my parents. I don't want... I just can't do it."

"So you want to spend time with your sister, but you don't want to spend time with your parents," Stella said. "Then why not ask Miele to come here?"

"She's ten," Flora said. "Remember? She can't come by herself. If I ask her to come, my parents will come too."

"And then we're right back where we started," Musa said. "Couldn't you talk with her on the phone more?"

"We're from Linphea," Flora said. "Only talking by phone... well, Miele doesn't like that. I don't like it."

"And we're stuck again," Aisha said.

Flora sighed. "Let's just meet up with the others. No point in letting my problems ruin a loop where we're all Awake."

"So, movie later?" Bloom asked.

"Sure," Icy said. "Are there any new ones?"

"I think so," Bloom said. "I think we've gotten a few bleeding over from the Hub, which is nice."

"And how long until we meet them?" Icy asked.

"Who knows," Bloom said. She glanced over at where Musa and Darcy were chatting about something. "I still don't get what Musa sees in her."

"Well I don't get what Darcy sees in *her* , so I guess we're even on that," Icy said.

"You dated Tritanus in baseline," Bloom said. "You don't get to criticize other people's choice of dates."

"You almost married Prince Loser. Twice!" Icy replied. "And you're still planning on hooking up with him when he's Awake, aren't you? At least I learn."

"Whatever," Bloom said. "I don't even know why I talk to you."

"Because I'm the only option at the moment," Icy said. "Stella's all over her boytoy, so they're out. Nerdlinger and Stormy are... what are they doing, actually?"

"She's your sister," Bloom said. "Why don't you know?"

"Because I don't keep tabs on everyone all the time," Icy said. "What are they doing?"

"I think Stormy's trying to expand her powers," Bloom said. "Timmy knows a lot about how weather works, so she's learning. I think."

"Great, whatever," Icy said. "Aisha is teaching the twerp something, probably about those Windriders or whatever."

"I think they're just comparing notes at this point," Bloom said. "Roxy's gotten pretty good at riding."

"And our fearless Anchor is busy moping, so, surprise, her wife is there to make her feel better," Icy said. She sniffed. "It doesn't seem to be working."

"Flora's having family issues right now," Bloom said. "Lay off her."

"Family issues," Icy said. "You mean with her parents who only sort of exist? No wait, there's the kid. Sister trouble?"

"Something like that," Bloom said.

"Ah," Icy said, the sharp facade softening a little. "What kind of problem?"

Bloom squinted at the ice witch. "Why do you care?"

"I have two sisters of my own, in case you'd forgotten," Icy said. "So, what's Flower Girl's issue?"

"She doesn't want to visit her parents," Bloom said. "She does want to visit her sister."

"And they're a package deal," Icy said. "Delightful."

"Pretty much," Bloom said.

"You know what?" Icy said, getting to her feet. "Fine. I'll go talk some sense into her."

"Icy, wait-" Bloom said, but the witch was already moving. "Oh this can't end well," Bloom muttered.

"You," Icy said.

Flora looked up. "What do you want?"

"For you to stop screwing up with your sister," Icy said.

Techna opened her mouth to speak, but stopped when Flora put a hand on her shoulder. "What do you suggest?" Flora asked.

"Just tell her," Icy said. "You fairies, always making everything so complicated! Go to your sister, tell her the truth, and then deal with it! Freaking fairies! Ugh!" She spun on her heel and stomped away.

"You know for Icy, that was almost subtle," Techna remarked. "Flora, I-."

"She's right," Flora said. "It really is that simple."

"You're just going to tell her," Techna said.

"...Yes," Flora said. "That's exactly what I'm going to do." The anchor took a deep breath, then let it out. "Techna, I'm going home."

"Do you want company?" Techna asked.

"If you want to come, I'd love to have you," Flora said. "But you don't have to."

"I'll come," Techna said.

Flora knocked on the door to the house. It varied from loop to loop, though a few variants showed up a bit more frequently than others. This was the version that had been grown out of a tree using magic. Techna stood next to her, her fingers entwined with Flora's.

"Who is it?" a voice asked.

"Open the door and find out," Flora said.

There was brief pause, and then the door opened to reveal a little girl. "Flora!"

"Hey, Miele," Flora said, bending down to hug her little sister.

"I thought you said you couldn't come home?" Miele asked.

"I changed my mind," Flora said.

"Miele, who- oh, Flora," a woman said. "It's good to see you've come home."

"Just for a visit," Flora said. "Mom, Miele, this is Techna."

"A pleasure to meet you both," Techna said.

"Likewise," Flora's mother said. "Please, call me Olivia." Flora nodded. She had the right set of memories. Probably. It wasn't the first time her mother had been named Olivia.

"Of course," Techna said.

"So, Flora, I assume you brought Techna here for a reason?" Olivia asked.

"Of course," Flora said.

"My job is to distract you and your husband while Flora catches up with her sister," Techna said in a perfect deadpan.

"Techna!" Flora said, resisting the urge to swat the taller fairy.

"And how are you going to do that?" Olivia asked.

"Mom," Flora said. "Techna's my girlfriend."

"Well, I gathered *that* ," Olivia said.

"I'm from Zenith, if that increases the distraction factor," Techna said.

"Marginally," Olivia said. "Come in, both of you. Flora, I'm afraid your father's not in right now, but he should be home soon."

"That's okay," Flora said. "I wanted to talk to Miele about something first."

"Okay, but don't go too far," Olivia said. "So, Techna, tell me how you and my daughter started dating."

Techna sent a reassuring nod in Flora's direction, then followed Olivia into the kitchen.

"So what did you want to talk about?" Miele asked.

"Not here," Flora said. "Charmix." Her old wings appeared. "I'll give you a ride?" She held out her arms and her little sister jumped into them.

The two of them took to the air, buzzing up through the canopy. "You've gotten a lot better at flying," Miele said.

"Just a bit," Flora said, setting them down on one of the enormous leaves that stuck out from the tree's branches. The leaf bowed a bit, but held their weight just fine.

"So what did you want to tell me?" Miele asked, sitting down.

Flora sat down across from her. "Miele, what I'm about to tell you is going to be pretty hard to believe. But I need you to keep an open mind about it. Please."

"It can't be that bad, Flora," Miele said.

Flora sighed. "Some of it is. Some of it isn't. Please, just listen."

"Alright Flora, I'm listening," Miele said.

"Then imagine a tree," Flora said. "Every leaf a person and every branch a world..."

"I'm home!" a voice announced as the door to Flora's home opened.

"Welcome home, dear," Olivia said, stepping out of the kitchen. "You'll never guess who came to visit."

"Hmm," the man said. "The Oakenfells?"

"No," Olivia said. "Flora's home."

"Really?" he asked. "And what's the occasion?"

"She wanted to talk to Miele," Techna said, stepping into view. "And introduce me to you."

"This is Flora's girlfriend, Techna," Olivia said. "Techna, this is my husband, Rowan."

"A pleasure to meet you," Techna said.

"Well, I see my daughter found quite the catch," Rowan said. "Where is she?"

"She's out with Miele right now," Olivia said.

"They should be back soon," Techna said. She hoped.

"So that's why I don't come and visit much," Flora said. "I'm sorry."

"Flora..." Miele said.

"Yes, Miele?" Flora asked.

"Can you show me your Enchantix wings?"

Flora blinked. "Sure." She closed her eyes and her Charmix form vanished, leaving her in the clothes she'd arrived with. Her Enchantix wings formed behind her, fluttering gently in the breeze.

"They're really pretty," Miele said.

"I've gotten used to them," Flora said.

"Flora, I'm scared," Miele said.

"About what?" Flora asked.

"What happens when the loop ends?" Miele asked. "Do we die?"

"No," Flora said. "You just sort of... forget."

"But you said that mom and dad are never the same!" Miele said. "That's not just forgetting!"

"Miele, I don't know what to tell you," Flora said. "I don't really know what happens to your memories when the loop ends. The only people who might know are the Admins. I can ask Fand the next time I see her, but I don't know if even she knows."

"And I'll be gone by then!" Miele said, tears forming in her eyes. "It won't be me, it'll be a different Miele, with a different mom and dad!"

"I'm sorry, Miele," Flora said. "I keep hoping you'll start looping too, but..."

"But you don't think I will," the little girl sniffed.

"No," Flora said with a heavy sigh. "Come here." She pulled her sister into a hug.

"I don't want to go away," Miele said, burrowing into Flora's embrace.

"I know," Flora said.

"Take me with you," Miele said. "Please."

"Miele, I..."

"Can you?" Miele asked. Flora was silent. "You can't, can you?"

"I... I could," Flora said. "I just... I don't think it's a good idea."

"Why not?" Miele asked.

"You could... You could live in my Pocket," Flora said. "But you'd have to give up everything to do it. You'd never see mom and dad again, and even if you did, they wouldn't recognize you."

"I guessed," Miele said. "I still want to go."

"There's more problems," Flora said. "I can... There are ways to make you immortal, I guess-"

"I don't want to be immortal," Miele said. "I just want to grow up."

Flora stared at her sister, tears threatening to escape. "Miele... I can't... I can't watch you do that! I can't watch you die!"

"You don't have to," Miele said. "I'll get as old as I want to, and then I get to find out what happens when the loop ends."

"Miele..." Flora said.

"Please, Flora," Miele said. "I'm not ready to go away. Not yet. Please?"

"Miele, I..."

"Just, think about it, please?" Miele said.

"I'll... I'll think about it," Flora said.

"Thanks," Miele said.

"We should probably go back," Flora said. "We wouldn't want to keep mom and dad waiting."

"I guess not," Miele said.

25.6 (Awesomedude17)

Flora stared at the white rabbit and smiled.

"Aww..."

It was then that someone who knew the rabbit shouted...

"Flora, be careful."

"Unless it's the killer rabbit that requires a Holy Hand Grenade, I'll be fine, Twilight."

"That's not what I'm talking about."

"Than what-OUCH! He bit me!"

The rabbit stuck out his tongue and scurried off.

"Sorry, Angel doesn't like most other Loopers. He prefers Fluttershy."

"Oh, wow. I could not really have figured it out on my own." Flora said as she nursed her finger.

Twilight shook her head.

Perhaps she'd tell Angel the tale of how Flora took down DIO or maybe the one involving the Predator, just to make him realize who he just bit.

25.7 (Awesomedude17)

Flora had these Loops before. It's nothing new.

Still was annoying though.

The Unawake Trix, Darkar, Valtor and the Wizards of the Black Circle had teamed up to create a super team determined to lay waste to Magix, and the Winx Club were the only ones who could stop them.

"No more! We're taking you down!" Bloom shouted valiantly.

It sucked to be the only one Awake.

The two forces prepared to fight, and then...

"MUCKLE DAMRED CULTI 'AIR EH NAMBLIES BE KEEPIN' ME WEE MEN!?"

The two sides turned to see a old man wearing a Hawaiian shirt, shorts, and shades and he also had a shotgun.

Oh shit... Flora thought.

Old Man Henderson was here to derail the plot.

25.8

"You did *what* with your sister?" Twilight Sparkle demanded.

"I put her in my pocket," Flora sighed. "She's over there if you want to talk to her." Flora gestured helplessly towards a woman a who looked like a slightly younger version of Flora.

"Flora," Twilight said, carefully keeping her voice level. "Please. Explain to me *why* you decided to put your non-looping sister in your pocket."

"Because she asked me to," Flora said. "Twilight, I... She was afraid of what would happen at the end of the loop. Even with everything that's happened since, I love her. I couldn't bring myself to say no."

Twilight sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose between her fingers. Fused loops, altering loopers' body forms since time immemorial.

"Flora," Twilight said. "You should know why this is a bad idea."

"You don't have to tell me," Flora said. "I offered to try making her immortal. Do you want to know what she said?"

"Not really, but go ahead," Twilight said.

"She said 'Thanks, but I want to grow up,'" Flora said. She threw herself on the grass of Alphea's quad and let out an enormous sigh. "I like having my sister around. I really do. But I'm not looking forward to what's going to happen over the next few loops."

Twilight scowled at the fairy lying on the ground next to her. "This is why you should have told her no."

Flora looked up at the older looper. "You don't have a sister," she said. "You wouldn't get it."

"I have Spike," Twilight said.

"He's more like your kid," Flora said. "And Nyx actually is your kid. Telling them no is part of your job. I don't have that kind of practice."

"Great," Twilight said. "So because you've never been a parent you can't say no to your sister, and now you're doing something stupid to make up for it."

"Pretty much," Flora said, sitting up. "Look, Twilight, I know this was a mistake. But it's my fault, not Miele's. She's only got a few loops in her, and I want to make them good ones. This is her first repeat, and, aside from you and a few of your friends showing up, it's pretty much baseline. I want to show her what our home has to offer while I have the chance. Please, Twilight, I know I made a mistake telling her about the loops in the first place, but I'd like to make the most of it. So, will you help me?"

Twilight was silent for a moment, then sighed. "Fine. Friends help each other, and you are my friend."

"Thanks Twilight," Flora said.

"Just don't do this again," Twilight said. "For your own sake if nothing else."

25.9

One of these centuries I'm going to give up the whole wizard for hire thing. I'm going to stop taking cases, I'm going to stop poking my nose where it doesn't belong, and I'm going to stop almost dying. Really. I am.

At the very least, it would cut down on the number of times trouble walked in through my office door.

Today's case in point, one vampire-faerie-conceptual entity hybrid with a grudge against me because of my tendency to fry her wife whenever I get close to her. I've killed all of the above at least once. In baseline. All three is a bit more than I'm interested in dealing with though, especially given that killing this person would be neither effective nor a good idea. So instead I said hello.

"Mrs. Victoria," I said. "Welcome to my loop."

"Harry Dresden," she said. "I need a favor."

Professional tip, when a faerie needs your help, it's never good news.

"That is a nasty piece of work," I said as I inspected the wooden stake she'd placed on my desk. She'd had it in an isolation unit and she'd only been willing to handle the isolation unit with tongs. She clearly didn't like being in the same room as the thing, and she wasn't willing to touch it with a ten foot pole.

"Dresden, I need to know how to deal with this," Flora said. "I already know it's a nasty piece of work."

"Well let's start with the obvious then," I said. "This was designed and created specifically to kill you. The combination of elements is, well, it would be borderline useless against an ordinary fae, or a vampire, or even a chaos deity, but all three at once..."

"And it burns me when I touch it," Flora said, exasperated. "I know what it does. I need to know how it does it and how to stop it."

"Well that's simple," I said. "I does what it does by being complete anathema to what you are. The easiest way to stop it would be to change what you are."

"Fine," Flora said. "Why is it so harmful to me?"

"It's a wooden stake," I said. "That's a direct attack against your vampiric side."

"Okay..."

"It's made from hawthorn," I said. "The Faerie tree. That by itself wouldn't do much. It might even make you stronger. But," I pointed at the thin network of grey that wove through the stake. "it's been tainted with cold iron. That'll hurt your faerie side all by itself, and when it's mixed with hawthorn wood the contradiction makes it much worse."

"And the magic on it?"

"Old black magic," I said. "Meant for killing Angels and Demons alike. It's not a perfect match for your Chaos Goddess aspect, but it's close enough to make it work."

"So what do I do to stop it?" Flora asked.

"That's a good question," I said. "It's targeting the three strongest aspects of what you are."

"So I need something it can't hurt," Flora reasoned.

"That might reduce its effectiveness," I agreed. "It's like adding a piece to your Name."

"But it wouldn't stop it," she sighed.

"Not unless you stop being those things," I said.

There was a long moment of silence in the room before she spoke again.

"I can't do that," she said at last.

"Sorry I couldn't be more help," I said.

"You did your best," Flora said. "Before I go, Techna asked me to give this to you." She pulled out a disturbingly intricate series of circles in the form of a bracelet. The number of metals involved and symbols etched into the metal went straight past ridiculous and into the realm of the utterly absurd.

"What is it?" I asked, cautious. Neither of the people involved in this thing had reason to like me.

"Techna took your anti-tech aura as a challenge," Flora said. "This is her solution. Well, the prototype at least."

"This thing can stop me from wrecking machines?" I asked.

"It should stop you from doing so by accident at least," Flora said. "Or at least, it will until it burns out. Techna estimated a service lifespan of about five years of constant use. Less if you deliberately break technology while wearing it."

I stared at the bracelet. Five years wouldn't get me through a full loop, but if it worked... I could have light bulbs in my house for a

change. I could have an actual stove. My car wouldn't break down every other week.

It was being offered by a Faerie. Even if she was from another loop, deals with the fae always come with a catch. "What do you want in return?" I asked.

"Techna wants notes on the thing's performance," Flora said. "Monthly reports, if you can manage it."

"So you want me to do homework," I said.

"My wife does, yes," Flora said.

I've made worse deals before. "Done," I said.

"Good," Flora said, putting the sigil on my desk. "Have a good day, Mister Dresden."

She turned and walked out of my office.

I really need to get out of this business.

25.1: You've... been... trolled, you've been trolled, yes you've probably been told...

25.2: Not sure what's going on here, but hey, bottomless spaghetti.

25.3: Is it wrong to wish that the real world worked this way?

25.4: I think you've made your point. No? Okay then.

25.5: This can only end in tears.

25.6: Bad rabbit!

25.7: Old Man Henderson. Farewell, plot.

25.8: Oh dear.

25.9: And no progress on that front. Sorry Flo'.

Chapter 26

26.1 (Awesomedude17)

Bloom Awoke within some kind of suit. And for some inexplicable reason, everything was bright and cheerful and sugary sweet.

"MRR PHMM, MWAH FAH MMPH?"

"Ah, Bloom's Awake." Techna said as she fiddled with her wrench.

"MRRMRR?" Bloom grabbed her mask, which was muffling her voice.

"Welcome to 2fort, Bloom. You're the Pyro... for some reason. Also, there's a Misaka Glitch where our BLU counterparts are Awake, so we're going to kill each other." Darcy said as she suddenly appeared from nowhere.

"AH! Quit that!" Musa shouted, right before fiddling with her eyepatch.

"Never." Darcy disappeared again.

"Right, so... breakdown." Aisha started off. "I'm the Heavy, Flora's the Medic, Techna's the Engineer, Musa's the Demowoman, Icy's the Sniper, Stormy's the Soldier, of course-"

"HEY!"

"-Darcy's the Spy, Stella's the Scout, which leaves you as the Pyro."

"MMMR PHRR MMR MRR..." Bloom put a hand over her... his... their face.

"Also, it would appear that not one of us has any knowledge of your gender. Hope that's not a problem."

If Bloom's mask could glared, it'd be what she was doing now.

"Mission begins in 10 seconds!"

"LEEEEEEEEEEEEET'S DO IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIT!" Musa shouted as she readied her grenade launcher.

Bloom shook her head as she readied her magic trumpet (flamethrower) and prepared to bring about amazing joy from rainbows (agonizing pain from fire.)

"5! 4! 3! 2! 1!"

"Mission is a go!"

The doors opened as Darcy disguised herself as a RED Demo, and Stella rushed straight to the battlefield. Bloom followed Techna to the intelligence room.

"MMM MMR MMM MRRRIN?"

"Building a sentry." Techna said as she prepared her sentry gun. "Keep watch for Spies. We don't want any of my buildings sapped."

Bloom readied her toy (weapon) and looked for any signs of Spies.

"HAHA! WOOO!" The RED Stella shouted as she dodged the fire from Stormy!

"Dammit Stella, hold still so I can explode you!" The BLU Stormy shouted.

"Nah." Stella took out her Scattergun and fired two shots right into Darcy.

"That was for setting fire to the sun!"

Stella turned, only to face the barrel of a Tomislav, owned by a BLU Aisha.

"Uh, aren't we friends?"

"BLU Stella's my friend, not you."

"Crud."

STAB

The RED Darcy sighed as Aisha fell over dead.

"Where's that sentry?"

The BLU Aisha respawned, blinking.

"Damn! I'll get that Darcy, sooner or later." She traded her Tomislav for a traditional Minigun and ran out.

As she exited the spawn, the BLU Flora ran by, looking for Stormy.

"Stormy! Stormy!"

"Here! What's up?"

"Got an Ubercharge. We're going to get the intelligence."

"Ohho Hell yes. Let's go through the sewers." The two went through the sewers, using an underused flank route.

When the two made a turn through the drainage pipe...

GUNSHOT

"What the! Flora?"

GUNSHOT

"Ooo, that must have stung, sister." The RED Icy said coldly with a smirk.

The RED Musa set down two sticky bombs and flew from RED base to BLU base. Firing several grenades towards anyone that was wearing blue, she made her way down to the Intelligence Room.

She stopped short of entering the room, and made a peek around the corner.

BEEPBEEP *GUNSHOTGUNSHOTGUNSHOT*

Sentries, eh?

FLAME!

"ARG! FIRE! FIRE!" Musa panicked, ending up in the range of the sentry gun, which quickly mowed her down.

"MMPH!" The BLU Bloom mumbled out.

"AHEM!" *STAB* "It seems that I've killed you Bloom. Apollogies." The RED Darcy cloaked and went straight to the sentry gun and the nearby dispenser, ready to lay down the sappers.

After several seconds, the sentry and dispenser exploded.

"Haha." Darcy turned to see a glowing shotgun.

"Those were mine." The BLU Techna stated, matter of factly.

"Oh."

GUNSHOT

The RED Techna kept vigilant. Her sentry gun was fully upgraded, and her dispenser was getting close.

FLAME

"AAAAAAAAAAG!"

"Thanks for taking care of the Heavy, Bloom... Bloom?"

Hairs began to stand on end.

Around the corner, BLU Flora and BLU Aisha came out, glowing blue from the Ubercharge.

"OH SH-"

MINIGUN FIRING

Flora picked up the intelligence.

"BLU team has picked up the RED intelligence!"

"Let's get out of-" Flora soon met face to face withher RED counterpart, paired with Aisha's own RED counterpart.

And then they kritzkrieged.

"Sorry Stella, but I just had to try and get that cute cranium of yours." The RED Darcy said to the corpse, calmly walking away.

"HEADS UP!"

JARATED

"Is this... JARATE?!"

"Yeah!" The BLU Icy took out her Bushwacka.

"Icy, I shall have my vengence!"

"Yeah yeah." *CRITICAL HIT* "You should."

"RED Team has picked up the BLU Intelligence!"

"Ah piss."

"Let's move it! Move it!" RED Stella said to herself as she ran off with the Intelligence.

Dodging several shots, she made her way to the Intelligence Room.

"Almost there."

SWING

SAW

The BLU Flora adjusted her glasses, rolling her eyes at how reckless Stella moved.

"YOU FAILED, STALEMATE!"

"What!" Flora shouted.

Riven watched the carnage from a private security feed. He shook his head at the fact that they both failed their mission. If he was there, he'd have already been done in 3 minutes, give or take a minute or two.

"Mr. Hale, Mr. Sky is here to discuss the weapons deal."

"Send him in." Riven replied, cracking his knuckles.

At worst, he'd have some stress relief from whatever had been happening recently.

26.2 (Awesomedude17)

"You did what?" Miles Edgeworth, Looping Prosecutor, asked with a tone that was not going to be pleasant at all.

"Put my sister into my pocket."

"Your Unactivated sister?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Victoria, are you aware of the ethical implications of such a statement? This is not something you do unless there are excruciatingly dire circumstances, and I doubt that your sister asking for you to put in the Pocket is such a circumstance."

"I know but... but..."

Edgeworth put himself into deep thought.

"I see. Even the most excellent of beings have flaws, and you are no exception, Flora."

"Excuse me?"

"Flora, even I admit that I can be too harsh when I'm in the courtroom. More than once have I tactlessly suggested a theory that was rather harsh to suggest, and yet I do it. Your flaw was not so obvious, until now."

"And what is that?"

"It's simple when you think about it logically. You're too selfless."

"Selfless?"

"Indeed. Your mentality is to help anyone in need, regardless of your own benefits. You're literally too kind to think about the damage to

your own reputation for bringing your sister into another Loop."

"Edgeworth, I don't know what you think, but I don't believe that you're right."

"Humph. I see that you're not going to accept my position. Very well, who am I to judge? Just remember this old saying. 'The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.'"

"...I'll keep it in mind." Flora got out of the office at the same time Phoenix Wright went in.

"How much have you heard, Wright?"

"Enough to be worried about Flora, Edgeworth. I'm not sure how the community is going to react to this information."

"Indeed. While not unheard of, putting a Non-Looper in a Pocket is certainly not considered ethical in the slightest. And then there's Fand's reputation as a good Admin with... quirks."

"At least she improved. Her latest one involving us was decent."

"Wright, the topic."

"Oh, sorry."

"No issues, it is just worrisome that this might lead to something even worse."

"All this talk about the Pocket..."

"I suppose we'll need to rest our minds on the issue for the moment. When is your daughter's next show?"

"In a week, on Friday. Why?"

"Do I need to answer?"

"Oh. I suppose I'll invite you."

"Good. I'll see you then, Wright."

"Me too, Edgeworth."

26.3 (lord Martiya)

"Let me get this straight, Flora." Cornelia said to the visiting Anchor. "You told your Unactivated sister about the Loops, she asked you to get into your pocket to stay with you because she was under the impression the final Miele would have not been her, and you couldn't say her no?"

"Pretty much." Flora admitted bashfully.

"In another situation I would have been in doubt between courage and foolishness, but not this time: this was the stupidest thing you've ever done."

"Maybe, but-"

"No maybes or buts. I have a little sister too-an adorable little pest-and sometimes tell her of the Loops, but I would have never done that-after all, just like your sister, her appearance in the Hub proves she's still the same. No matter how Yggdrasil interpretates them at time, under that they are the same, and will always be."

With that Cornelia hugged her fellow Looper, both to console her and help herself ignore the voice in her head suggesting that, maybe, the thing about Lilian being the same was a lie she was telling herself to cover her cowardice.

26.4 (Evilhumour)

"Hmm," Ciaphas said, tapping his chin as he listened to what Flora told him about taking her Non-Looping sister with into the Loops. "I honestly cannot say I *approve* of what you did, but on the same note I cannot say I *disprove* of your actions either. From what I have seen of Russ and the other primarchs, family is very important," he paused, taking a sip of his tea. "I wish I could save everyone at times, and I have to admit I was tempted at times."

"So what did you do?" Flora asked him, somewhat revealed to hear *another* opinion on the matter.

"I did it," Cain said as matter as fact. "I learned from it; I cannot say anything to you as you have made your mind up on the matter and you need to learn from your actions."

"That's...surprisingly helpful," Flora blinked in surprise.

"I *am* a professor, Flora," Cain smiled as he reached into his pile of paperwork. "Here you go and you need to put more work in your paper as I know you can do much better."

Flora looked at her C- paper and almost glared at him but caught herself.

26.5

Flora sat in the chair next to the hospital bed, her heart doing its best to tear itself in two. She turned to look at the cause of her distress. Miele lay there, sleeping. For a non-looper, Miele was very old. One hundred and eighteen to be exact. A long and fulfilling life by the standards of a non-looper.

It was the blink of an eye to Flora.

"Flora!" Miele said, running over to greet her elder sister. They only had two loops where their appearances would let Miele get away

with being the younger sister, and this was the second. Flora was graduating from Alfea this year, and Miele was a freshman. A far cry from the usual ten year gap in their ages.

"Hello, Miele," Flora said. "How have classes been treating you?"

"Great!" Miele said. "Oh, you should meet my friends, and I met this guy from Red Fountain-"

"Miele," Flora said, her heart aching with what she was about to do.

"What?"

"You can't," Flora said, squeezing her eyes shut to hold back the tears. "You can't date the guy, and you should be careful about your friends."

"What? Why?" Miele demanded.

"Because they'll be gone in another four years," Flora said. She looked up at Miele. "Miele. I know I explained the loops to you, but it can be hard to really grasp. *Nothing you do matters.* Everyone you've met will vanish in a few years, and even if they don't, they won't remember you. You have to be careful about who you let into your life, and under no circumstances should you fall in love. It'll only end with you getting hurt."

Miele stared at Flora in shock. "But- But- You and-"

Flora sighed. "Miele. In baseline I dated Helia. Techna dated Timmy. Neither of those things are true anymore, because they weren't Awake. Helia still isn't looping. I don't date Helia because I'm committed to Techna, but even if I was single, I still wouldn't do it for the same reasons Techna stopped dating Timmy. Do you understand, Miele?"

Miele could only stare as the reality of the loops came crashing down on her.

Flora wept anew at how much her sister had been denied. A long life, sure, but nowhere near as rich as it should have been. Miele should have grown up, fallen in love, and had children of her own. She should have had friends who'd known her for decades, rather than having to restart her life every seven years.

"How's the job hunt going?" Flora asked.

"Terrible," Miele sighed as she flopped down on the couch. She was old enough that she could pass as Flora's mother at this point. "I don't have any records, I don't have any references, and even my degree is basically worthless. I don't know what to do."

"I might be able to find something for you," Flora says.

"Thanks," Miele said.

"You're welcome," Flora said. "I'm sorry," she added in a whisper.

Miele didn't hear the second comment. Instead she turned on the tv and started flipping through channels. Then she turned it off with a noise of disgust.

"Something wrong?" Flora asked.

"There's nothing on that I don't already know the ending too," Miele said. "It's boring."

"A bit," Flora said.

Miele should have had a career. She should have had a life of new experiences, a life where things actually happened, where the world aged with her. Instead she was trapped, living the same cycle over and over again, even as she grew older and older.

Miele and Flora sat together in the park. Miele was now old enough to pass as Flora's grandmother. The two watched as children rushed around on the park's playground, exploring the plastic and metal structures.

Miele didn't say a word, but Flora could hear the quiet sigh she let out. Flora didn't say anything either, just sat next to her sister and watched the children running around.

At last Miele tired of the park and got to her feet. Her knees were sore and stiff, her hips giving her problems of their own. She was barely able to walk on her own, preferring to lean on Flora.

The sisters made their way out of the park and back to the house. Miele eased herself into a chair and leaned back, closing her eyes.

Miele should have had a family, children and grandchildren and even great-grandchildren of her own. She should have had more than one sister who never aged past twenty three. She should have had people to grow old with, people with whom she could reflect upon their shared history. She should have had more.

Flora wept for the sham of a life she'd given her sister. She'd done her best to help Miele, but in the end it hadn't been enough. The loops were no place for mortals. It was a harsh lesson. A cruel lesson. One she had brought upon herself, through her own actions.

"I never should have told you about the loops," Flora muttered. She started when she felt a hand on her knee. She looked up to see Miele looking at her.

"Maybe not," Miele said. "But I'm glad you did."

"Why?" Flora asked. "All the loops did was hurt you in so many ways!"

"But I got to grow up," Miele said. "I got to get old. I got to see you."

"That's not enough," Flora said. "You should have had so much more."

"And I will," Miele said. "When the tree is fixed, I'll have everything."

"But it won't be you," Flora said. "It'll be a different Miele."

"She'll still be me," Miele said. "And you'll still be there to help her." She looked up at the clock. "The loop's ending soon, isn't it?"

"Yes," Flora said heavily.

"Tell the next Miele that her big sister loves her," Miele said. "Please, tell her for me."

"I'll tell her," Flora said, choking on the words.

"And Flora?" Miele asked. "Promise me you won't blame yourself for this. This was my choice."

"Miele, I-"

"Promise."

"I- I promise," Flora said.

"Good," Miele said, sinking back into the hospital bed. "And now to find out what's beyond the loops. Goodbye, Flora."

The new loop began. Flora wept.

Fand stared at her screen. A message was waiting for her there.

"Activate new Looper: Yes/No?"

Fand stared at the screen for a long moment. She looked over at the screen displaying Flora as her looping friends comforted her. She looked back at the message.

There was a long silence in the fairy admin's office.

Fand placed her fingers on the keys. There was an obvious answer before her. An obvious solution. This opportunity would almost certainly never come again. She should do it.

But she couldn't. She typed in a quick no and closed the message. Flora was right. Miele deserved more than the loops could offer. Fand pulled up the archived copy of the previous loop and extracted the data on Miele. A few quick modifications to a side project she'd been working on for a while let her insert the personality data into the program. She crossed her fingers and fired up the program.

A fairy avatar appeared on her screen.

"Hello? Where am I?" the fairy asked.

"Hello," Fand said. "My name is Fand, I'm the Admin for the Winx loops."

"Oh, Flora told me about you!" the fairy said. "Um, I'm her little sister, Miele."

"I know," Fand said.

"So... this is where we end up when the loop ends?" Miele asked, flitting around the screen.

"Not exactly," Fand said. "I thought you deserved more than being erased when the cache is dumped, so I used your data to create an AI program. That's what you are right now, a program on my terminal."

"Oh," Miele said, frowning in thought. "So do I just... live here, or what?"

"Well if you want, you can help me watch over your sister," Fand said.

Miele brightened. "Sure! When do we start?"

26.6 (lord Martiya)

Darcy and Musa walked in Cloudtower's main hall, their smiles giving chills to the second year witches and prompting the third years, the smarter students and the professors to summon snacks.

"Oh Racheeel!" Darcy sweetly called at the green-haired Bloom lookalike that, for no decent reason, tried to make herself an annoyance every Loop.

"Yes, miss Darcy?" the green-haired witch, trying-and failing-to hide her dismay that Darcy was with Musa.

"You tried to get my beloved and me to break-up. Bad idea... But seriously, you hid your tracks so badly that I can't even get angry. It's just... Pitiful."

At that Musa took a picture of the Bloom lookalike's offended face, sure that Icy and Stormy would like the sight and ready to enjoy whatever Darcy had planned next.

"No, Rachel, I can't hurt you, you clearly need help." Darcy continued. "So, as Musa would say, it's time to Befriend you."

As all the other witches guessed something big was about to happen and hid behind Griffin's shield, Rachel, misunderstanding what was happening for an opportunity to strike at the Trix, said: "Sure! I'll be glad to be your friend!"

Icy and Stormy were returning from a successful experiment when they saw Cloudtower shake from an explosion.

"Looks like we missed some fun." Stormy whined.

"Don't worry, I'm sure one of the freshgirl was filming this." Icy said. "Plus, we can still see the next part."

On clue a battered and burned Rachel crash-landed before the two sisters.

"Stand still! We want to Befriend you!" Musa and Darcy shouted as they flew in.

Terrified, Rachel tried to run, only to find Icy had frozen and glued her feet to the ground. And then came a new explosion.

26.7 (Awesomedude17)

"Welcome to Blood Gulch, ladies. Half your usual group's here, the other half over there. Also, it seems that the witches are now Freelancers. Any questions?"

"Is it too late to abandon this place?" Techna asked.

"If I could, you'd think I'd stay?" Church retorted.

"He has a point." Flora pointed out.

"Anything else?" Musa asked.

"Yes, I'll die thanks to Caboose being a team-killing fucktard, so when that happens, at least fucking bury me."

"Are you religious?"

"Pff, after meeting Monkey? I'd say you're joking, but then it'd be more sad that you weren't."

"Riiight." Techna trailed off.

"Ladies, welcome to Blood Gulch. Your job, kill all Blues, preferably with Grif as a casualty. Any questions?" Sarge said.

"Yes, can we not?" Bloom asked.

"Insubordination! If you weren't a lady, I'd call you a traitor!"

"And that about sums up our visit here." Stella said.

"Agreed." Aisha replied.

"Hey, all we do is nothing anyway, so who cares?" Grif said.

"Uhh, don't we go out and kill a bunch of Freelancers eventually?" Simmons asked.

"Sí. Realmente no es algo para preocuparse. Voy a saludar a Techna. Ella es buena." *Yes, we do. It's not really something to care about. I'm going to say hi to Techna. She's nice.* Lopez walked off.

"Ditto for me. Later morons." Grif walked off with Lopez.

"Sure. Ah'm sure you're going to do something worth a little with Lopez, Grif. As if that's possible."

"Techna was right." Aisha said. "This place sucks."

"And that also sums up our stay here." Bloom said.

"Yes it does." Stella sighed.

26.8 (Awesomedude17)

'Again?'

The Unawake Trix, Darkar, Valtor and the Wizards of the Black Circle had teamed up to create a super team determined to lay waste to Magix, and the Winx Club were the only ones who could stop them.

"No more! We're taking you down!" Bloom shouted valiantly.

Flora prepared herself.

The two forces prepared to fight, and then...

The doors opened to reveal a trio of red wearing men.

"The Spanish Inquisition? We weren't expecting you!"

"NO ONE EXPECTS THE SPANISH INQUISITION! Our chief weapon is surprise!"

Flora couldn't say she expected that.

'After the Spanish Inquisition, I'd expect nothing less.'

The Unawake Trix, Darkar, Valtor and the Wizards of the Black Circle had teamed up to create a super team determined to lay waste to Magix, and the Winx Club were the only ones who could stop them.

"No more! We're taking you down!" Bloom shouted valiantly.

Flora was more than annoyed internally at the sameness of this.

The two forces prepared to fight, and then...

Out through the doors came a blue-wearing, muscular man.

"Never fear, Anchor, The Tick is here!"

"Who?" Flora asked.

"Congrats on meeting another MLE, Flora. Food for thought." Shepard said.

"At least Fand was nice enough to send me here instead of Eiken. Who would think that overcharging the Dragon Fire would be a good idea?"

"The Tick."

'Okay, I'd kill for something normal'

The Unawake Trix, Darkar, Valtor and the Wizards of the Black Circle had teamed up to create a super team determined to lay waste to Magix, and the Winx Club were the only ones who could stop them.

"No more! We're taking you down!" Bloom shouted valiantly.

The two forces prepared to fight, and then...

"FLORA, I FOUND YOU!"

"Caboose?!" Flora shouted as the blue wearing man in armor wandered in.

"Flora, are you Awake of Asleep? Wait, what if I'm not Awake, but I am Asleep. OH MY GO-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-"

'LOOP CRASHED'

Fand stared at the screen, and felt an urge to scream.

"MOOOOOOOOOOOONKEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEY!"

26.9 (Awesomedude17)

"I heard great things about you, Flora Victoria. Impressive resume too. Hellsing vampire, protege of Commander Shepard, defeated Dio Brando, befriended Harry, the only non-anime version of the O7, strangely enough, and you did that in spite of living only a fraction of a fraction of the amount of Loops I had."

Ichigo turned to Flora.

"I suppose you're just lucky to have the life you have."

"Uh, thanks. Actually, I was with Ranma not too long ago." Flora awkwardly looked down at a random rock.

"How was that?"

"Well, a jealous Icy is about the least bad thing that came into the equation."

"No idea who that is, but it sounds like something mildly interesting."

"Uuuuh..."

Previously...

"Ranma, I shall defeat you with the might of the Dragon's Fire so that I may finally have Akene as my wife!" Valtor shouted as he transformed into a demon.

"Oh... wow... haven't heard that before." Ranma replied as he glanced at an embarrassed Flora and Bloom, who just shrugged and grinned.

"Is it weird to say that-"

"No." Ichigo preemptively answered.

"Oh."

"...Guess I got nothing better to do now. Let's spar."

"Wait, what?!"

"Relax, I'll give you 0.5%."

"I get a feeling that that's still a lot."

"It is."

Flora blinked, and then teleported away.

"You know, you could have just said no." Ichigo mumbled out with annoyance.

26.10 (Awesomedude17)

It was a quiet night in Magix. At most, the crickets chirped throughout the night. Across Magix, there were three couples, only set apart from other beings by the simple fact that they were Looping and Awake.

And now, we look at them.

{line break}

By the fireplace, Brandon and Stella huddled together, sipping hot cocoa and simply enjoying this moment together.

"This is nice." Stella remarked.

"You don't need to say that again, cutie."

"You're right, but I just had to, handsome."

The two chuckled.

"You know what, Brandon... for the longest time, I was really worried that you might never begin Looping. I mean... when Timmy got Activated, I knew that one day, you'd do the same. I waited for you, and it all worked out in the end."

"Yeah, it did. Of course, that came after Flora and Techna got married and Darcy and Musa went steady."

"Yeah, poor Timmy. Oh, and Riven might have a awkward moment when he's Looping."

"I think he would. Still, I'm sure he'll be fine. I know Timmy is."

"Right." Stella took a sip of cocoa.

"I'm sure we'll deal with it when it happens. For now, let's just enjoy this."

"Mmm." The two cuddled each other.

Laying down on the grass, Musa and Darcy stared at the sky. The stars twinkled and the moon shone bright.

"See this Musa? This is what the night looks like."

"I know what it looks like. I just usually sleep during it."

Darcy gawked at Musa.

"Why you little..." Darcy grabbed Musa and began to tickle her.

"Hehe... Stop! I'm ticklish! Hahaha!"

"Not until you apologize for being a smartass."

"Haha... I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Please stop!"

Darcy briefly considered the apology, and then backed off.

"Apology accepted."

"You suck. Haha."

"Of course I suck. I'm a witch. A wicked witch."

"Yeah well, perhaps you should show me what other ways you suck if you're so proud of that."

"Is that some sort of invitation?"

"I don't know." Musa said in a sultry tone. "You tell me."

Darcy chuckled. Things were really interesting now.

Inside a restaurant, Flora and Techna sat down, awaiting their dinner.

"How'd you find out about this place?" Flora asked.

"Timmy told me about it. He also said that Musa and the Trix were banned after they provoked the homophobes here on purpose." Techna replied.

"Of course. The Trix are always doing this when Darcy's Awake."

"More wine?" A server asked.

"Yes, please." Flora replied. "Guess we'll have to thank Timmy later.

"I already did. He really appreciated the Flux Capacitor I gave him."

"Time traveling Timmy... oh my gosh, that has a good ring to it."

"Well, he's unfortunately unable to get a Delorean, so I don't think he'll be traveling through time anytime soon."

"Shame."

The server gave the couple their meals and went off to serve the others.

"Wow... this is actually really good." Techna said.

"I know. It's really hard to be on par with most Loopers."

"Most?"

"Leman Russ tends to somehow turn boiled eggs into a Tyranid killing poison."

"Oh. Of course." Techna laughed. "Thanks for the reminder.

"No problem. I honestly think that I might come back soon."

"You think?"

"...You got me."

The two laughed.

"So..." Techna placed her ringed hand over Flora's own ringed hand. "What do you say about just spending the rest of the night in bed, cuddled together?"

"That'd be nice."

"Good. Love you."

"Love you too." The two kissed.

26.1: Team Fortress Two. Not much else I can say about that.

26.2: Virtues taken too far can become vices...

26.3: Public opinion can be cruel.

26.4: A voice of experience speaks.

26.5: Neither tragedy nor triumph, but rather a fate caught betwixt and between.

26.6: And the White Devil's legacy continues to grow.

26.7: Red vs Blue. Not a fun place for a vacation.

26.8: I don't even know.

26.9: O7 members are scary. Run Flora, run for the hills!

26.10: Happy belated Valentines Day.

Lapidary

(Jeanne Summers)

Lapidary

Loop: The First

Diaspro almost fell as she missed the step, suddenly overcome with disorientation, arms snapping out to grab the railing.

'The palace stairs?' That couldn't be right, she'd just been... how had she...

"Princess Diaspro? Is everything alright?" She looked over to the palace guard.

"What am I doing here?" Her question seemed to confuse the guard.

"My lady? Aren't you here to sit in on the finalization of the new trade contract with the Nephthys colony?"

'But that was years ago...'

"What's day is it today, the, the date?" Her eyes widened at the guard's reply, if he was to be believed, she'd somehow been transported several years into the past.

'I've been given another chance, a chance to stop that wretched girl from stealing the love of my life, the chance for my happy ending.'

This time she wouldn't let that horrid Bloom take Sky away from her.

Loop 40

Diaspro paced in her room, tugging on her hair.

'There has to be a way, there HAS to be!' Over and over she'd relived the years, over and over she'd lost Sky to Bloom. No matter what she tried, no matter what she did or didn't do, she just kept losing.

'I won't give up, I WON'T! Bloom WON'T keep my happily ever after from me!' Diaspro let out a shriek as her tugging pulled several small chunks of hair free from her scalp.

Loop 52

Diaspro shrieked as she lunged for Bloom, a shard of her magic in hand. The gemlike construct sunk deep, cracking as it hit bone.

The two girls hit the ground, Diaspro's grip unsteady on the suddenly slippery shard.

Bloom coughed, a wet, sticky sound, her eyes wide as she stared up at Diaspro in shock.

Diaspro looked down at her hands, unable to breathe as she caught sight of the liquid spilling out around the embedded crystal.

Bloom choked as blood began filling her lungs.

"No, no, I didn't mean..." Diaspro let go of her make shift weapon, struggling to make sense of the blood on her hands, on her dress, on Bloom. "Bloom?"

Bloom didn't move, didn't breathe.

"No, nonononononononono..." black spots covered Diaspro's vision, her hearing was assaulted by the sound of blood rushing in her ears. She opened her mouth and-

---

Loop 53

- screamed at the top of her lungs.

Charlie swerved as his daughter started screaming, apropos of nothing.

"Honey? What's going on?"

His baby girl started scrabbling at her hands like she was trying to get some invisible substance off of them. He pulled the car over.

"Bells? Bells! What is it, what's wrong?!" She continued to scream, he kept trying to get an answer but for an hour she did nothing but scream. Only once she'd screamed herself hoarse did she subside into whimpers, but by that point she'd started leaving scratches on her hands and wrists deep enough to draw blood, which in turn made her moan and mutter unintelligibly.

Charlie sighed to himself, grabbed his radio and stepped out of the car. He'd been afraid that something like this might happen one day, but Bella had always seemed so much steadier then her mother, he'd hoped it would never happen.

"And there's history of mental illness in her mothers family for...?"

"Bella would be the fourth generation, but it's never been anything like this before."

"Do you know what triggered her episode?"

"No, we were just driving, and out of nowhere she started screaming and doing that thing with her hands."

"How long ago was that?"

"Two days, I got the first appointment here I could, she's been screaming, whimpering or sleeping the whole time since."

"Has she been sleeping restfully?"

"No, she keeps twitching, like she's having bad dreams."

The Doctor paused to write something down.

"Well, the best thing is to keep her here under observation for 72 hours, after that we can reassess her case and figure out where to go from there."

Two months later

Becky brushed a lock of brown hair out of her face, the color was different to yesterday, she'd had to re-dye it, her roots had been showing and the color had been getting too faded. To much time in chlorine water.

Parking her cart by the open doorway of room 204, she knocked quietly.

"Bella? Hey, it's time for your medication." The blonde girl didn't look up, didn't acknowledge her as she enter, meds and water in hand. With trained movements Becky helped the girl take her medication, speaking softly as she worked.

"I spoke with the Doctor, he said I could put up that picture I was telling you about, what do you think: on the wall across from your bed so you can see it easily?" Becky examined the younger girl's hands. "Mmmm, your nails are getting a bit long again, time for a manicure I think. So how about, once I finish my med' rounds, I come back here and I'll trim your nails, then you can head off to the common room, and when you come back, I should have the picture up. Sound good?"

Bella didn't respond, but Becky wasn't really expecting her to. The girl was, in laymen's terms: a grade A vegetable, with a side order of

fruitcake.

"Okay, that's the plan, I'll be back soon."

Becky sighed and resumed her rounds. As far as patients went, Bella was one of her favorites, despite being, in effect, living furniture. Her other patients were rowdier, some of them triggering as a result of other patients getting rowdy. Bella only seemed to be triggered by a few things: red liquids, gingers and red heads (the reason Becky had taken to dying her hair brown), and, more oddly, fairies and crystals, but only the pointy kind.

Well, at least Bella would let Becky talk on end about her dreams of becoming a professional photographer.

Loop 54

"We're sorry my lord, we truly don't know what happened, her maids found her like this."

Peering through the door, the Duke was able to make his only daughter out in the early morning light. She was pressed into a corner, muttering to herself, unkempt and distressed. He thought, though he wasn't sure, that she may have pulled some of her hair out. Without warning Diaspro began rocking, the volume of her muttering increased as she began scrubbing violently with her hands.

"Fetch a healer, and keep this quiet."

Loop 58

Diaspro was in a bland, quiet room. A small peeping noise broke into her fugue, slowly she turned her head. A tiny blue wren was perch on the window sill, having slipped through the small gap between the sill and the open wind.

She tried to wrap her mind around it, this tiny, blue, peeping thing. With aching, heavy, clumsy limbs she stood, and stumbled closer to it. Her shaky hand reached out and the wren jumped across onto it.

Diaspro pulled it closer to her face, to her eyes, tracing the ruffle of the feathers.

Something sparked in her brain, deep, deep beneath the heavy fog.

"Princess Diaspro?" The voice from the door was disbelieving, she turned to it. A young man in healers garments stood, gaping at her. "Princess Diaspro, do you know where you are?"

Did she know? No, she didn't. The wren peeped curiously at her, drawing her attention back to it.

"How did that get in, I'm sorry Princess, is it disturbing you?"

Diaspro opened her mouth, trying to say no, it wasn't disturbing her, but all that came out was a raspy noise. She shook her head and held the wren closer to her body.

Sun shone down on her, birds sang, grass whispered in the breeze.

They told her she'd been unwell, for a very long time. Diaspro got the feeling it was longer than they thought, wondered how many times her curse had caused time to reset itself while she was... 'unwell.'

Loop 63

Diaspro stared dejectedly from her balcony, hundreds of metres below her, invisible in the dark of the night, was a courtyard. It had been the same courtyard where her engagement party had been held only last year. (Hundreds of years ago now)

Now it was a bitter reminder that she had been happy, so happy. A happiness she would never have again.

Earlier that day (just like dozens of times before) Sky had called off their engagement, for Bloom, his 'true love.'

Diaspro scowled at the ground below, a dark, dark thought creeping into her head. Of all the ways she'd tried to end this accursed time loop, there was something she'd never attempted.

Disregarding the way it tore her satin night gown, ignoring the cold bite of wind that tugged at her skin with out her robe, Diaspro pulled herself onto the balcony's edge. Her vision swam at the sight of the dark void below her, the knowledge of what she planned weighing down on her. But she really couldn't do this again.

With a heavy sigh Diaspro let herself fall forwards.

Tumbling through the air, wind rushing past her ears, she fought the urge to transform and fly to safety.

Stella and an unusually morose Brandon sat cuddled on the couch of the Winx Club's dorm room, most of the other girls, plus Roxy and Timmy, sat scattered about the room. It was a full cast loop, and the group had decided to take it easy, with the Trix off doing their own thing. A quiet beeping broke the laziness that seemed to hang over everyone.

"Sorry Stell' I've got to go." Brandon extracted himself from Stella's grasp.

"What, why?"

"If I don't leave now I'm not going to make it to the funeral in time."

Everyone looked at him sharply.

"What funeral?" Flora asked. Brandon frowned.

"Didn't Sky tell you? He said he was going to."

"Tell us what?" Stella tugged at his hand.

"Uhhh, awkward. Diaspro, they found her body in the courtyard below her balcony four days ago, the investigation team seemed to think it was... suicide."

"Four days ago? As in, the day after Sky broke up with her for Bloom, four days ago?" Aisha asked incredulously.

Brandon winced, and nodded.

"That seems highly out of character for Diaspro," Tecna spoke up. "In all the loops we've experienced, I can't recall her ever taking her own life."

None of them could.

"Should... should we go to the funeral, do you think?" Roxy looked around the room. Stella shook her head.

"No, I don't think her family would appreciate it, they might blame us for what happened, if she killed herself because Sky broke up with her. Seriously who does that?!"

"Stella," the sun fairy's eyes snapped to Flora, "we don't know that's why she killed herself. If that's what happened."

"Yeah... maybe..."

"Should we at least send flowers or something?" Musa asked.

"That might be a good idea," Aisha agreed, "a card maybe, with our condolences? Just, nothing over the top."

Flora nodded silently and summoned a bouquet of flowers, which she handed to Brandon.

"Give her family our condolences."

"I will." It was a solemn room that Brandon left behind.

"I can't believe Sky didn't say anything," Timmy broke the silence a few minutes later.

"I can't believe some one as strong headed as Diaspro would do that," Stella replied.

"Oh no," everyone looked to Aisha, "who's going to tell Bloom?"

"Where is she anyway?" Musa asked.

"I don't know," Tecna admitted, "but she did leave an hour ago."

Bloom returned as the sun was setting, humming as she entered the room. She stopped short at the morose atmosphere.

"What happened?"

The six fairies and Timmy shared a dark look, Stella stood up with a deep breath.

"Diaspro's dead, she committed suicide a few days ago, they found her the day after... the fight, after Sky called off the engagement. Her funeral was today, we only found out when Brandon had to leave."

Bloom looked at her friends, disbelief showing on her face.

"Diaspro – bitchy, super rage, 'you stole my fiancé' Diaspro – killed herself?"

"Yes."

"Yeah right, that's a terrible joke Stella, you really shouldn't kid around about suicide. Diaspro might do some crazy things in response to Sky dumping her, but kill herself? Please."

"It's true Bloom," Flora defended, "it's possible that this loop's version of Diaspro is the kind of person who would. Because she did, she threw herself from her own balcony."

"Well then... you're wrong about her funeral being today."

"What makes you say that?" Musa asked.

"Because if Disapro's funeral was today, Sky would have been there. But he spent the day with me, you know, on that all day picnic he invited me on two days ago?"

"Bloom..." Tecna looked vaguely sick as she handed Bloom her palm top, a news article covering Diaspro's funeral on display.

"I feel sick."

Bloom and Stella reappeared in the dorm room, the others instantly by their sides, Stella holding herself up with her staff, Bloom was on her hands and knees dry retching into the carpet.

"Bloom, honey what's wrong?"

"I don't like this loop, I don't I don't I don't. Oh god I hope this isn't the version of Sky that starts looping!"

"What?"

"He's a fricking sociopath!" Stella shrieked, "we went to ask him about the funeral and he was just..."

"He didn't care, he started sweet talking me in FRONT OF DIASPRO'S PARENTS!"

"GIRLS!" Tecna's voice made everyone's heads turn as she sprinted into the dining hall.

"Miss Tecna please!" Griselda grumbled, but Tecna ignored her.

"It's Eraklyon!" Tecna pushed several plates aside to put her palm top down, a holo-display popping up, "Timmy just sent it too me."

The display began playing a news article about the Civil War on Eraklyon. Word had gotten around about Sky's 'infidelity' and his behavior on the day of Diaspro's funeral, suspicion had arisen concerning the events leading to Diaspro's 'suicide,' which was now being called into question.

Anecdotes about Sky's concerning behavior, and how it had been hushed up by the royal family, had been leaked.

In the week since Diaspro's funeral, the arguments in court had devolved into actual fighting until, at last war had been declared between the royal family and the rest of nobles of Eraklyon.

Loop 95

Diaspro was in hell.

She didn't know what she'd done to deserve it, but she was in hell. Forced to live several years of her life over and over again, watching as her fiancé was stolen time and again by the same girl.

No matter what she tried, no matter what she did, she just couldn't win.

It wasn't fair, why couldn't she be happy? Didn't she deserve to be happy? Didn't she have the right to once, just once, get her happy ending with the boy she'd loved her whole life?

Diaspro pulled her sheets up over her head, and pulled her pillow to her face, crying silently into the soft surface.

Maybe this time she could just not deal with it.

Loop 101

The 'Enlightenment Loop'

Diaspro had a plan.

It wasn't much of a plan, but it was all she had.

Double checking her luggage she smiled. This time she'd cut the romance off before it could even start.

She ended up sharing a room with one of the seniors, who was too busy with study to pay Diaspro much attention. She'd managed to 'bump into' the Winx Club on her way to her first class. Now to mark her territory.

"Oh my gosh I'm so sorry, I didn't see you there, are you alright?" Diaspro surprised herself with how concerned she sounded for Bloom, as the red-headed fiancé stealer picked herself off the floor.

"I'm fine, I haven't seen you around this last week..."

"I just transferred in, sort of a last minute thing." The Flower Fairy, Flora was giving her an odd look. Diaspro ignored it and introduced herself. "I'm Princess Diaspro of Eraklyon."

"I'm Bloom, of Earth, and these are my friends," Diaspro did her best to feign interest, like she didn't want to wrap her hands around Bloom's throat and squeeze.

"So Diaspro," Flora asked when Bloom finished, "what brings you to Alfea?"

"Well, I'm sort of the future queen of Eraklyon, so I thought, what better way to serve my people than to become the best Guardian Fairy I can be, you know, and Alfea is *the* place to go to learn to be a Guardian Fairy."

"Wait, future queen?" Stella asked, face crinkled in confusion, "I thought prince Sky was next in line for the throne."

Diaspro chuckled and ducked her head, a calculated gesture of shyness.

"He is, I'm from one of the other noble families on Eraklyon, prince Sky is my fiancé, we've been engaged for years." Diaspro kept her smile sweet as she waited for the fallout. Flora's eyes narrowed dangerously, but she said nothing.

Stella spluttered angrily, Bloom frowned, her face marred by worry for her friend.

The bell for classes tolled before anyone could say anything further.

The six girls hurried to class, but the Winx spent the entire day whispering angrily amongst themselves.

After classes Diaspro found them huddled together, talking.

"Maybe Diaspro was lying, you don't think it's weird," Musa was asking as Diaspro stopped around the corner to listen, "new girl shows up two weeks into term and she's engaged to your boyfriend? Please, tell me I'm not the only one who thinks this is weird."

"I just don't believe it, Sky doesn't seem like the kind of guy who would flirt when he's engaged, and he has been sending very clear flirting signals," Stella said with heavy denial.

Diaspro readied herself and stepped around the corner.

"So call him," the group turned to her so fast she was surprised they didn't hurt themselves. "Sorry for eavesdropping, I came to apologise, I got the feeling I'd upset you somehow before class, and well... we're going to be sharing the same school for the next few years, I didn't want to make enemies on my first day, so I came to clear the air.

"But if that's what's going on, if my fiancé is cheating on me, I think I'd like to know as much as you do. So call him, we'll get this sorted out."

Flora frowned deeply, but nodded in agreement.

"She's right, it's best to get everything out in the open, miscommunication can be very dangerous, no point letting your doubts fester."

With a hmph, Stella whipped out her phone, the holo display showing Brandon's face.

"Why-" Diaspro cut herself off, waiting for them to ask.

"Why what?" Stella asked waspishly.

"Sorry, I just wanted to know why you were calling Brandon, I think it would be better to talk to Sky directly."

Stella, and most of the Winx Club, gave her a 'what?' look.

"This is Sky," Stella indicated with a nod to the picture of Brandon.

"Nooo, that's Sky's squire, Brandon. Sky's blonde," Diaspro pulled out a picture of the actual Sky, and showed them.

"That's Brandon," Bloom exclaimed, a blush covering her cheeks.

"No, again, this is Sky," Diaspro pointed to her picture, then to the picture on Stella's phone, "that's Brandon."

"Call him," Tecna said suddenly, "it might be that Diaspro is lying, but at this point the only thing we can do is ask the boys directly."

"Or, you could, you know, look it up online. There's been a few articles on Eraklyon's new trade agreements, which Sky attended, not to mention Teen Fairy covered my engagement party."

Flora smacked a hand against her forehead, the unexpected slap startling everyone.

"Sorry," the Flower Fairy apologised, "I just feel like I should have thought of that earlier. But you might suspect hacking or something, so just, call your boyfriend Stella, let's get this mess cleared up."

"Fine," Stella pouted and began the call, she put the phone on speaker before anyone could pick up.

" *Hey Stella!* "

"Hey Sky."

" *Is everything alright? You sound a bit down.* "

"So... you'd tell me if you were... engaged right?"

" *...* " The strangled gasp and silence on the other end were very telling.

"Or if you weren't who you sai-aid," Stella started crying.

" *Babe? Oh man, okay Stell' I'm gonna come over, alright, I'm going to be right over, just wait for me, everything is going to be okay.* "

Diaspro watched in mute horror as Stella collapsed to the ground, muttering 'it's true' over and over under her sobs. Diaspro had

wanted to hurt Bloom, to stop her from stealing Sky, she'd completely forgotten about how Stella and Brandon were involved.

Her heart ached in sympathy, she knew what Stella was feeling right now, how the lies came tumbling as her image of the world crumbled.

She took half a step forward, reaching for Stella, but Flora stepped in between Diaspro and the Winx.

"I think you've done enough, Princess Diaspro." Flora looked at her with such poison, Diaspro flinch, tears gathering in her own eyes.

"Flora don't," Bloom called from where she was wrapped around Stella, "even if Stella wasn't dating her fiancé, the boy we thought was Brandon asked me out two days ago. Diaspro's fiancé has been cheating on her, and he's been lying about who he is, both of those boys have. Diaspro isn't a villain here, she's as much a victim as Stella and I are."

Diaspro looked at Bloom as if she'd never seen her before. How could Bloom say that after all they'd been through?

'Oh right, she hasn't been through it.' Diaspro's resolve wavered, and she ran.

Diaspro was on her way to the Winx' dorm when she heard Brandon and Sky talking as they walked through the corridor, with a quick twist of magic, Diaspro was hidden from sight. Silently she followed them to the dorm, slipping in after them as Musa held open the door.

The chairs had been arranged so the two boys would be sitting, facing the five girls. Flora's eyes seemed to catch on Diaspro's invisible form, as the princess made her way to lean against one of the walls.

She wanted to know what the boys had to say, but Diaspro wasn't ready to interact with the girls again.

So she leaned against the wall and listened, listened as they explained why they'd switched identities, listened as they explained why they'd made overtures towards the two Winx girls.

Brandon wasn't in a relationship, and he'd hoped Stella would like him regardless of what is rank or name was, he acknowledged that he should have been more honest, acknowledged that he'd been in the wrong, and told Stella that he did care for her, and would wait for her to decide what would happen, where they'd go from there.

Sky explained that his engagement was political, that he'd never been in love with Diaspro, couldn't ever imagine being in love with Diaspro.

And oh didn't that hurt, like every time she'd seen him choose Bloom, like every time she'd lost, over and over again, but all at once. She pressed her hand to her mouth to stifle the sobs, and slid down the wall as her legs gave way.

She didn't even hear Bloom as she ranted at Sky for what he'd done, that just because he hadn't loved Diaspro, didn't mean he wasn't still engaged, and what had he thought was going to happen, that he could just date Bloom on the side for the rest of his life, that Bloom would be willing to be a home wrecker, a side girl, a booty call.

What had he thought was going to happen?

Sky had nothing left to say, guilty silence filling the air.

"I think both of you need to leave," Stella said with a terrifying calm, "now."

The boys left.

Diaspro felt a hand on her shoulder, looking up she saw the pity filled eyes of Flora. Without a word Diaspro let her invisibility drop.

"I loved him," she managed to say through her tears, "I've loved him since I was five, I was so happy when we got engaged, it was the happiest day of my life. I just wanted to be with him, beside him, for him to love me as much as I love him."

Bloom sat down beside her, as Flora sat down on the other.

"It's never going to be me is it? He's never going to pick me. Whycan'titbeme!?"

It took three days for Diaspro to stop crying, which, her being the Fairy of Gemlight, got a little awkward when her magic started turning her tears to crystal as they fell from her eyes. More than once, one of the other fairies had stepped on a crystal while barefoot.

Tecna had jerry-rigged a little robot to sweep up the tears, which now sat in several large jars by the walls, the Winx unsure what to do with them.

Sitting in front of Stella's vanity, Diaspro gave her reflection serious consideration. With deliberate motions she applied her make up and untangled her hair

"I am princess Diaspro of the house of Isis of Eraklyon, I am the fairy of Gemlight, and I deserve to be happy." She told her reflection, she stopped to take a steadying breath before forging on. "Prince Sky doesn't love me, and-and that's okay, becau-because I will find my own happiness. I will be okay. I will be okay. Iwill beokay. I will beokay. Iwillbeokay."

She shut hers eyes tight against the new tears that threatened to fall, repeating her mantra over and over until someone knocked at the door.

Bloom poked her head in.

"Hey, you almost ready?"

Diaspro inspected her make up for tear marks, there were none.

'I am going to be okay... one day.'

"Yeah, I think I am." On shaky legs Diaspro made her way out the door to Join the Winx Club for some retail therapy.

In the Winx Club's dorm room the six fairies sat around, half of them eating pizza as they celebrated the defeat of the Trix and the Army of Decay. Diaspro smacked her hand over her mouth, trying not to spit out her food, as Kiko's tumble prompted her to laugh.

Beside her, Bloom let out an 'Urgh!' as she snorted soda out her nose. Stella laughed harder and handed Bloom a napkin, Musa started choking on her pizza, and only Tecna and Flora managed to escape relatively unscathed.

Over the weeks and months she'd spent with the Winx Club, Diaspro had learned a horrifying fact: she liked them, they were likeable. When not fighting over Sky, Bloom and Diaspro got along very well. Stella and Diaspro spent time swapping 'princess tips' and chatting fashion, while Musa was her go to girl for theatre performance companions.

Tecna was a little awkward, not very good at expressing her feelings, and tending towards blunt, but Diaspro was discovering she didn't mind.

Then there was Flora, who looked at her with curiosity, who sometimes seemed to know more than she should, who went to say things to her only to stop and shake her head, occasionally with a 'never mind,' or 'later.'

The door opened and all attention turned to the newcomer. Mirta waved hello, an awkward look on her face, before she brought in four new boxes of pizza.

"I found the missing pizzas, Amaryl's group had them..."

"Yay!" Stella let out an excited whoop, diving for her pizza, Diaspro cleared a space beside herself and beckoned the harried ex-witch over.

"How are you feeling?" Diaspro asked, Mirta looked pale, but that wasn't anything new.

"Tired, worn out... Lucy said she never wants to see me again, that our friendship is over and I'm a disgrace to witches everywhere."

With a sympathetic sigh, Diaspro looped an arm around the girl's shoulders.

"You followed your heart, you did the right thing even though it was very hard. She may just be angry right now, if you leave it for a while and try talking to her again later, she might feel differently. But if she doesn't, you have to examine the situation and decide if its worth it to spend your life chasing her, if it will mean chasing misery that will not end. There are people around you who care about you, and want to see you happy.

"I know she's been part of your life for a long time, but sometimes the things we love aren't good for us, we have to be strong enough to see the truth when they are."

Like with her and Sky, because he was hurting her, no matter how much she loved him, might always love, but she was learning, finally learning to let go, to actually focus on herself, rather than what she thought she wanted.

The realisation she was at last making the first steps to moving on sank into her, warming her from the inside out. It felt like the first time

she'd transformed, the tingle of magic flowing through her.

"Diaspro!" Her eyes flew open, she hadn't even realised she'd closed them, following everyone's gaze, she looked down, a wire and jewel amulet sat on her chest, the bottom line dipped upwards, sitting just right that, when she was transformed, it would have crowned her chest jewel.

"A Charmix," Flora said in awe. The Charmix disappeared, Diaspro smiled, then frowned, turning to Mirta.

"I'm so sorry, I just stole your emotion turmoil spotlight, I was just... I was thinking bout the similarities between my relationship with Sky and your relationship with Lucy, and how I've finally started to move on, because I don't deserve to spend the rest of my life chasing misery."

"No, it's fine, congratulations! And you're right, I do have people who care about me, but I need to know for sure, whether I've lost Lucy for good, before I give up on her."

In the realm of Relix, such as it was, six fairies and their hero companions faced off against Darkar and an Evil Bloom.

Had this happened before? Diaspro didn't know, but she had to stop it.

The two sides began fighting, Diaspro somehow managed to dodge all of Bloom's dark attacks, closing the gap between them. She readied an attack of her own - *Bloom was looking up at her, confusion and surprise etched on her face, Diaspro's hands slipped in the blood, a shard wedged deep in Bloom's chest* - she faltered. The Fairy of Gemlight didn't feel Bloom's attack hit, but she did feel the pillar as her back hit, her spine stretching out and around the curve. Her feet and her head hit at roughly the same time before she fell to the ground in a heap, her hearing muffled, eyes unable to focus.

She couldn't, she couldn't – she *had to* .

Diaspro wobbled to her hands and knees, wings not responding the way they should have. Shaking, she used the pillar to pull herself up, eyes casting around, trying to make sense of the battle.

Her vision caught on Brandon, struggling to his knees, turned away from Bloom, who was preparing a bolt of white hot fire in her hand.

Brandon had always been good to her, diplomatic, if not truly friendly. She'd like him well enough, Stella loved him.

'Bloom would never forgive herself.'

Diaspro wasn't sure who she was trying to save, but she forced herself to move, slamming Brandon out of the way just in time.

Just in time to take the hit for him.

Brandon rolled with the blow, coming to a stop metres away.

Diaspro skidded, toppling from the edge of the platform to the void below, Bloom's mad laughter in her ears.

Something surged through her as she fell, something bigger and more than the Charmix, something beyond words and feeling, something that *was* .

Every cell in her body felt energised, shiny and new, her wings unfurled behind her, bigger and bolder than before. Stronger. Around her neck her power pulsed like a heart beat, she reached for it, a bottle coming away in her hand. She pulled the stopper and flung the contents high overhead, reversing her descent and rising through the dust to rejoin the battle.

It did not look good, Bloom held Sky in a fiery grip, her powers pressing down on him. Ignoring Darkar and the others, Diaspro flew straight at Bloom, Fairy Dust at the ready.

Beneath the onslaught of purifying magic, the darkness in Bloom evaporated in a moment.

Darkar fell not long after.

Diaspro sighed as she stared at the photos that she'd collected over the past few years. The calender was running out, if she hadn't broken the curse that made time repeat itself, she had mere hours before she'd wake up several years in the past.

She should be with the girls, with her friends, but she just couldn't.

Diaspro curled up on her bed with her albums, and did her best to burn the pictures into her brain, to hold off the loneliness.

Flora had done a last minute check of her things, making sure she had everything she wanted in her Pocket. She had, in fact done the last minute check several times in the last hour, now she sat with a magazine she wasn't reading, fidgeting on a sofa.

Bloom looked over from where she was grabbing a juice from the fridge.

"You've been staring at that page for a while now, is everything alright?"

Flora looked up, startled. "I have the worst feeling that I'm forgetting something important," she confessed. "I know there was something I had to do, something I was putting off maybe? I just know it was important."

The group looked at each other, trying to figure out what their friend had forgotten.

"I can't think of anything you said you wanted to do," Tecna said from her computer chair. The other girls made agreeing noises.

"Do you want me to call Diaspro, you-"

"DIASPRO! I haven't told her about the Loops!" Flora dashed out of the room, racing for Diaspro before the reset. Flora had meant to approach Diaspro about the Loops, but it never seemed like a good time or Flora just hadn't been thinking of it. It's not like she was one hundred percent certain Diaspro was Looping, but their had been a few instances...

Flora cursed as Bloom introduced herself as Veranda of Callisto, gaining a strange look from both her and Stella.

'I really hope she wasn't Awake.'

Loop 102

Diaspro found herself standing in front of a green, circular door. Beside her a man with golden hair and a beard knocked.

The door was opened by a slightly smaller man with bare, and hairy feet, who did a second take at the sight of her.

The man beside her was dipping into a bow saying "Fili-" and giving her a strange look, like he was waiting for her to do something.

"Feeling a bit loopy dear," the man in the doorway asked.

"I am NOT crazy," Diaspro almost shrieked in outrage. And alright, so she may have spent the equivalent of a century in a variety of sanatoriums after that – one – incident, but she was not crazy. Just, very lost, and a bit confused.

"Ah, new to the loops then, you two had better come in, I'll get you a nice cup of tea, dear." The man waved them in, Diaspro stumbled as she stepped forwards, looking down at herself she realized her

clothing, even her body was different. Her breathing became very erratic.

"It's alright, everything is going to be alright, just leave your things by the door. That's it, now why don't we start with your name?"

"Sub-space pocket?"

"Yes, all loopers get one, you just sort of:" Bilbo reached into his pocket and pulled out a book. Diaspro copied him, not expecting anything, but just trying to get feel for how it worked.

Both she and Bilbo looked at the card in her hand.

"What's an MLE?" Diaspro tilted the card back and forth, unsure if she'd read it right.

"Malicious Looping Entity, why?" Diaspro showed him what was typed on the card's surface.

'Warning: Your recent actions have placed you on the MLE Watch List.'

"Huh, I didn't know there was a watch list for that."

Smaug rose, fierce and terrible above the unending sea of treasure. His wings beat against the air, sending gusts hard enough to knock people over, His jaw opened, ready to spew fire upon his tiny opponents.

Diaspro rolled her eyes, summoned a shard of crystal twice her normal height, and sent it hurtling, with unerring accuracy, through the gap in the dragon's scales.

Smaug's body dropped to the ground in an instant, shaking the cavern, which in no way bothered Diaspro as she flew over the

treasure, applying liberal amounts of Fairy Dust to fix the ambient curses.

Thorin nodded approvingly. "Well done, now Bilbo just needs to drop off that accursed ring, and we can start renovating the mountain."

Diaspro grinned at Bilbo, slipping on her Zoomix wings.

"All aboard the Fairy Express."

Loop 103

Diaspro was really glad Bilbo had explained things to her, because if she hadn't known about the loops: she would have most likely gone crazy again when she woke in front of a tv showing a cartoon version of life in the magical dimension, and herself a waitress at a small diner in a world without magic.

According to her new 'loop memories' she'd gone to high school with Bloom and Sky, and during senior year had caught the two together despite Sky being Diaspro's long term boyfriend at the time.

'Yes, thank you multi-verse, I get it! Me and Sky is never going to happen!' She was trying to move on, had taken multiple tentative steps to doing so, she didn't need the failed relationship rubbed in her face!

"One super meaty burger, one veggie bowl and three normal hamburgers," Diaspro gave a play by play as she delivered three orders to a table of good looking men.

"Hey, you alright, you seem a little down?" The man who spoke had green eyes and genuine concern in his expression. Diaspro sighed.

"I'm fine, I just... this is not my life, this is not the life I want to be living right now."

The tallest of the three – who seriously? Had to be part giant – gave her a smile and asked "feeling kinda loopy?"

Diaspro bristled, her eyes narrowed, she hissed her reply.

"I, am not, craz- Oh!" realisation struck her like a dwarven war hammer to the head. Her demeanor loosened in an instant and she tried to play it cool. "I- I mean, yes... some times... I could use a... n, an anchor."

The first man tried to hide a snicker.

"Sorry, you're not really gonna find one here, or you could find them all here, this is a hub loop."

"Right, I knew that, it's just my first hub loop. I actually just finished my first... 'fused?' loop. Cross over loop? Mr Bilbo Baggins gave me the basics... a hundred years ago..."

"Oh cool, Hobbit." The tall one spoke again, "book or movie?"

Diaspro gave him a confused look and a small 'huh?' Green eyes snickered again.

"First hub loop Sammy, she's not gonna know the difference." The two pulled faces at each other, the third man, who until now had been focused on his three burgers, looked at her.

"Why are you working as a waitress if it makes you unhappy?" The other two men turned to their companion. Diaspro turned to him as well, her eyes met his. An infinite blue, an impossible blue, something too, too bright and magnificent hidden beneath. She startled and took a step back, hugging her tray to her chest, as if it would protect her from his hidden brilliance as she broke eye contact.

"My apologies Princess Diaspro, I did not mean to alarm you."

Diaspro hunched in on herself, minute and uncertain beneath his gaze.

"In this life, pre-awake me had some... issues during senior year of high school, she didn't do so well in the exams and, here I am."

"Yeah," green eyes leaned forward, "but you're not her, so what are *you* doing here if you hate it so much. Hub loops are freedom, you can do anything you want. Short of destroying the world I mean."

"DIA! STOP LOITERIN', GET BACK TO WORK!" Her boss stuck his greasy head through the order window as far as it would go.

"What do you three do?"

"Play ourselves on tv, mostly," 'Sammy' admitted with a grin and a shrug.

"Any thing I want..." Diaspro felt hope blossom in her chest for the first time since she'd awoken in this miserable world. Grinning and feeling more than a little reckless, she turned on her heel and marched over to her boss, magic might not be a thing in this world, but it still flowed through her veins. Her tray hit the counter first, her apron second then, after half a second of deliberation, her uniform followed.

Standing there in her underwear and sneakers she held her head high.

"I. Quit." She put conviction into her words. Her (Ex)Boss's face turned a dangerous shade of purple.

"No. Ya don't ya little hussy, BECAUSE YOU'RE FIRED! GET OUT AND DON'T YOU EVER COME BACK!"

With a sneer Diaspro headed for her purse, before she could make it, a quite 'hey' dragged her attention back to the three men. Sammy had removed his flannel shirt and tossed it to her, she pulled it on

quickly with a 'thanks.' She buttoned it up, pleased how long it was on her much smaller frame.

A few seconds later a 'heads up' was all the warning she had as a belt came flying over. 'Ah yes, the dress/shirt look,' she grinned as she buckled it under her bust and at last grabbed her purse.

"Good luck with your new endeavors."

"Good luck."

"Have fun and don't get arrested!"

Chuckling at the encouragement, she gave a small salute to the trio and left.

"Freedom!" she took her first breath of fresh air as a free woman, and began the walk back to her tiny apartment.

Diaspro arched her back, stretching her arms high over her head as she tried to pop her back. Her small, crappy tv spluttered as the signal dropped out of sync for a few seconds, it had never been that reliable to begin with.

She'd spent the afternoon searching the internet for a new job, something to suit her interests and abilities.

"Urgh, this is going to be harder than I thought," she muttered to herself and rubbed her temples, trying to fend off her developing headache. Several hours of freedom from the diner and she still didn't know what she wanted to do.

On the television a loud voice over caught her attention, the start of an episode of reality television, people talking about 'taming the mountain' and uncovering its bounty. She scoffed, but moved from her computer to the tv none the less. She could use a break.

She spent the next hour laughing at the flailing attempts of the humans to find precious stones in the mountain's layers.

'I could do better than that, I *have* done better than that.' Several times after her initial engagement to Sky, the King had asked her to locate gemstone deposits for mining, it was an inherent ability her powers came with. Her time as a Dwarf had only honed the skill further.

"Well there's an idea," Diaspro may not have known what she wanted to spend the rest of the Hub Loop doing, but she knew a job she enjoyed and could excel at.

Diaspro hummed to herself as she switched the closed sign to open, and unlocked the door. Though it had only been three years since she'd quit her job at the diner, she'd managed to earn enough funds to lodge her own claim on a mountain side. A claim which had earned her enough money to open her own store in the off season, and provided her with the raw materials as well.

She turned to the room at large and smiled, her only store assistant, Emma, was nervously straightening a display.

"Alright," Emma looked up, as nervous as Diaspro was, "I hereby declare the Gemlight Jewelers Open for Business!"

Emma let out an excited peep, she'd been with Diaspro on the mountain for the last season, had been waiting alongside her friend to open the store. They'd finally done it. Now they had to hope it was a success.

The quiet hum of the grinder was soothing as Diaspro angled a tiny slab of Covellite across the whirling surface. She removed the stone and eyed it with a very singular focus. 'Perfect,' she decided and shut the grinder off, a run through the polisher and then she could set it.

Setting the stone down she reached her arms over her head to stretch her back and shoulders, glancing through the perspex window into the main store she froze.

"What the HELL!" Bloom and Sky, arm in arm looking over the engagement ring selection.

They were in her store. They were in *her* store looking at engagement rings! SERIOUSLY!

Diaspro may have finally accepted that Sky was never going to love her, that he was always going to choose Bloom, but this?

Come on!

During her last loop with the Winx Club, she come to accept the facts, but Bloom hadn't been actively dating Sky at the time, or rather, they'd done their best to not shove it in her face.

Diaspro glared through the window, trying to clam her breathing, it was fine, it was, it- "Nope!"

Emma smiled at the young couple as they discussed the rings, it was always nice to see people in love. Her smile dropped when she saw Diaspro enter the store from the back, still in her stone working shirt and jean shorts, a covered tray of jewelry in her hands. She was headed to the couple by the engagement rings and- 'Oh shit that's her 'I have malicious intentions' face!'

The couple didn't even notice her until she was placing the tray in her field of view.

"Diaspro!" They sounded surprised as Emma hurried over.

"Bloom, Sky, shopping for engagement rings I see." Emma's eyes widened with horror, she knew, had heard about the pair from Diaspro one night on the mountain side. This was not good.

"Yeah, we are..." the red-head, Bloom, looked nervous. Sky just looked angry.

"What are you doing here Diaspro? Are you following us now?"

Diaspro gave him her best 'Excuse you!?' face.

"I haven't seen you two since high school, why would I suddenly start following you now?"

"Because Bloom and I are finally getting engaged, and you spent your last year at school trying everything in your power to break us up and-"

"Oh for god's sake Sky! This is my store, I own it!"

"Really because you're dressed like-"

"Oh you did not just start a sentence like that!" Emma could have sworn she felt the air crackle.

"Congratulation Diaspro," Bloom cut into the tension, "I'm really glad you you've managed to-"

"Don't," Diaspro cut her off. "Now, engagement rings, you two either buy one of the most expensive rings we have, or go to another store." She removed the cloth from the tray to reveal a set of stunning rings. None of the basic diamond rings they stocked, these were one of a kind rings with an array of different stones to choose from.

Bloom's eyes zeroed in on one ring in particular. A heart shaped Fire Opal surrounded by Zincite set in a blend of white and rose gold.

She pointed it out to Sky, "that one, that's the one."

"Are you sure you don't want diamonds? They're traditional." Diaspro scoffed at Sky's words.

"Only since the early 1900's."

Emma stood by awkwardly as she tried to figure out what was going on, trying to figure out how to help. The bell over the door jingled merrily as a new customer came in, Emma took the chance to escape her responsibility as her boss's wing-person and moved to aid the newcomer.

"So that was awkward," Emma said, watching Diaspro put the tray of rings away.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Bullshit, I though you were going to rip that guy's head off."

"Urgh, I just... I got used to the idea of them 'being together' in an esoteric way, like, they way you get used to the idea of living on a giant hunk of rock spinning at enormous speeds while it hurtles around an unfathomably gigantic ball of burning gases in the infinite void of space. You know it's happening, and you accept that, part of you truly understands what's going on, but then someone comes by and rubs your face in it and it's 'oh my god what!?' all over again."

"I'm really not sure what to say to that, but have you ever considered getting professional psychological assistance?"

"No, but I was thinking about ordering Korean Barbecue for lunch."

"Oh well done, way to divert the conversation, that's avoidance, that's... actually Korean Barbecue sounds really good."

Loop 123

Diaspro was nervous as she strode into the Alfea courtyard. She'd taken a few dozen loops to herself, away from the Winx Club, gotten herself a few hobbies - including photography - taken some seminars

and self help courses, had taken many small steps towards getting better emotionally.

She wasn't the same person she'd been, she wasn't the same wretched fairy who'd killed Bloom over a boy.

Diaspro never wanted to be that girl again.

Flora spotted her first, looking startled, the other girls turned, to see what had surprised their friend.

Stuffing her sudden bout of nerves as far down as she could, Diaspro waved. The entire group looked shocked. Diaspro stopped, taking in the appearance of Aisha and Roxy with the girls, recognition on all seven faces, along side confusion. Good, she'd been right about the Pings, there'd been so many going off she would have been surprised if the Winx weren't Awake. She finally let off her own ping as she gave a tiny, nervous wave.

"Diaspro?" Bloom stepped forward, a deep frown marring her face.

"Hi Bloom, ummm... can we talk?" Suspicion chased the confusion from Bloom's face, but the red-head nodded, and didn't move. Diaspro took a deep breath, understanding the unspoken, 'what ever it is, you can say it in front of all of us.'

She pulled the letter she'd written decades ago from her the pocket of her worn jeans, the comfortable pair she'd picked up on Earth forty-eight years ago now.

Unfolding the paper, she cleared her throat and began to read.

"Bloom, you and I have a shared history of anger, and occasional violence. I realize now, that my actions were antagonistic and beyond inappropriate, but I would like to ask you to recognize that I was not the only one to blame. What happened between us was not truly our fault to begin with, but we made the decision to make it worse. I made the decision to let it consume my life.

"I want to apologize for the things I've done and said, since the last time we've 'truly' spoken, I've gone through a lot of changes. I've accepted that my feelings were unhealthy, and my love for Sky was toxic, I'm making steps to move on and move forward, and I would like your forgiveness as part of this transition.

"I understand that you were not to blame for what happened, but I felt a lot of anger about it, and blamed you for a long time. I want you to know that I have realized my mistake, and I have forgiven you for what happened. I hope you can find it to do the same for me.

"I'malsoreallysupersorryIwentcompletelyinsaneduringmyisolationand killedyouthatonetime."

"Did you just say you killed me?"

"Once..."

"Was this before or after you joined our group and cried, like, three giant jars of crystal tears?" Flora stepped in to ask.

"Uhhh... about a century in the sanatorium and five suicides before."

"Wait," Stella snapped her fingers in a 'I've got it' motion. "When you say suicide, did you ever throw yourself off of your own balcony into the courtyard below, just after the Day of the Royals?"

"Yes, that was the first one actually."

"Oh my gosh," Bloom fluttered her hands excitedly, "I told you that wasn't normal Diaspro behavior! That was a bad loop, Sky was a legitimate sociopath, and Eraklyon started a civil war because of him."

"NO!" Diaspro could feel herself starting to tear up, she really had become such a crier since she'd gotten back from being crazy.

"Also where did you get the idea for that letter?"

"I took some self help courses," Diaspro tucked her letter, and her hands, into the pockets of her jeans, slouching a little.

"Here's a question," Aisha waved her hand, to call everyone's attention to her. "How is it you've been looping, and we didn't know?"

"Oh, well, I did spend a lot of time away from you all, these last few I've been deliberately avoiding everyone, and there was a long time where I was in a sanatorium, and Bloom just said one of my loops that coincided with everyone else's was the one I killed myself in, and maybe it's just been a really long run of coincidences?" Diaspro didn't sound very sure of herself.

"So how did you figure out what was going on with the loops if this is the first time you've met up with another looper?" Musa crossed her arms and raised an eyebrow.

"After the loop Flora mentioned- hey! You were awake for that?"

"Yes! I'm so sorry, I kept meaning to talk to you but it was either a bad time, or I just wasn't thinking about it. It was a baseline-derivitive loop, I was curious to see what your addition to the group did to the story line."

"Oh, well, I suppose I forgive you, I mean, there was me thinking I was cursed or in hell, until I suddenly appear in front of this green door with a Hobbit asking me if I'm 'loopy,' I thought he meant crazy at the time and, well, actual sanatorium time... anyway, Mr Bilbo explained everything to me. I was a Dwarf in that Loop, I got some really nice training in lapidary and smithing."

"GIRLS! Don't loiter in the courtyard! We have a dance to prepare for!"

"Yes Griselda!" The eight girls called to their teacher.

"So to the dorms maybe?" Roxy suggested, the group nodded and began making their way into the building.

"Diaspro," Bloom fell in beside the blonde as they walked. "I'm so ready to move past this Sky based fighting if you are, like so ready you have no idea. But at the same time, I'm upset that you killed a version of me, so I might still be a bit weird about this." Bloom waved her hand back and forth between them, to indicate their relationship status.

"I understand, honestly I would have understood if you never forgave me at all."

"Well, I'm millions of loops old, you're what, barely into triple digits? I've become benevolent in my old age child." A quirk of her lips let Diaspro know she was joking.

The chatter of the Alfea fairies washed over the Winx Club, and Diaspro, as that ate their meal, taking a break in party preparations.

"I know I've said it before, but I'm really glad you decided to move forward," Bloom smiled at Diaspro as she passed the green beans.

"Me too, it wasn't easy to really face it, but learning I was on the MLE watch list really drove it home that I was not okay."

"... there's a watch list for that?!"

Location: Unknown

Time: Unknown

Fand threw the doors open with such force, they bounced off the walls so hard and fast they almost slammed shut in her face.

"Keech! Keech I know you're in here!" Amidst the dusty, nebula-like mass which encompassed the room, sliver strands began gathering, twirling and twining together, dropping down to the floor and coalescing into what nearly looked like a human woman.

"Fand. You are here concerning the potential MLE from your loop. Designation: Diaspro Isis. Species: Fairy. Threat level: Omicron."

"Damn right I'm here about Diaspro! Why didn't you tell me she been put on The Watch List?"

"Threat Level: Omicron: aberrant violent behavior leading to the Death of a 'main character' class individual. Subsequent behavior indicated potential redemption of personality matrix without outside influence."

"I have a potential MLE in MY LOOP! What am I supposed to do?"

"Nothing. Protocol Omicron: Monitor subject - full attention – has been in progress since her Event. Continued Monitoring advised, cycling down attention levels. Expected outcome: removal from list."

"Well... a memo would have been nice, my Anchor is a little concerned about how to deal with a potential MLE."

"Suggested reaction and interaction to threat level: omicron: behave as per normal."

"So, what? We just ignore the fact that she's a potential MLE?"

"Yes. I must return to my duties, Fand." Without further warning, Keech dissolved into silver strands which withdrew into the nebula.

Fand rolled her eyes and left with a huff.

Within the nebula, Keech wished they had eyeballs, so they could roll them. All pertinent actions concerning Designation: Diaspro Isis had been taken. If the case had required Fand's awareness, she would have been alerted. The Department for Monitoring of MLEs and Dangerously Aberrant Demeanor was created for the express purpose of dealing with, and occasionally averting MLE actualization.

(Admittedly it was only created after the emergence of MLEs, and it had taken a while to get running, and to figure out correct protocols,

but Keech knew what they were doing. Now.)

Firehawk242's Note: The well-read among you might recognize this as a slightly reshuffled version of the fic *Lapidary* by jeanne summers (there should be a period in between the names, but the site eats things like that...). There's a reason for that, as Lapidary is now canon to the Winx Loops. Additionally, I am proud to welcome Jeanne to our writing group. We hope to see more from her in the future. Jeanne?

Jeanne's Author's Note: Thanks everyone for the welcome, and I look forward to writing with you all. Please excuse me, I am a barely functioning ball of anxiety disguised as a human being, who doesn't know what they're doing at the best of times, so please feel free to correct me if I've gotten something wrong with the loops.

Firehawk242: You and me both Jeanne.

The next regular chapter is in progress, but has been delayed somewhat. Don't worry, we're still working on it, and it should come out in the not-too-distant future. Thanks for reading.

Chapter 27

Adminspace

Fand stepped into her office with a steaming mug of coffee in her hand. She sat down and tapped her terminal to life, occasionally pausing to drink from her mug.

"Good morning, Fand," Miele said as her avatar appeared on the screen.

"Good morning," Fand said. "Anything I need to know about?"

"You have a performance review with Tyr at ten," Miele said. "After that you're scheduled for lunch with Madoka. Your schedule says something about patch updates?"

Fand frowned for a moment, then nodded. "Right, we're working out the last of the bugs in the patch we used to remove the 'Ultimate Power' from Relix."

"Okay," Miele said. "Your afternoon is clear, though Zeus did request a meeting at six."

"Tell him no," Fand said. "I'm not going to give him what he wants."

"Should I use rejection form number four or number seven?" Miele asked.

"How about number three?" Fand said. "I don't use that one nearly enough."

"Number three it is," Miele said, opening the email program. She promptly vanished.

"Miele?" Fand asked, slightly concerned.

Miele reappeared, looking both annoyed and embarrassed. "I'm okay. I was fiddling with some of my settings last night and I think I activated some sort of auto-minimize function. Let me fix that..."

"Anything happen with the loop?" Fand asked.

"Nothing too interesting," Miele said, getting to work on the email. "The most exciting thing was a fused loop with Battletoads."

"How did that turn out?" Fand asked.

"Lots of lasers," Miele said. "It's less exciting than it sounds. I'll bring up the log once I finish this."

"Take your time," Fand said, pulling up the current loop. It looked like a fairly normal baseline loop. Not a terrible start to the day.

"Oh, Fand?" Miele said, sending off the email and bringing up the relevant log entry.

"Yes?" Fand asked, glancing over the log. Hmm. Yeah, that really was a lot less exciting than its description.

"I was doing some system maintenance the other day and I found a folder labelled 'ship fics'."

"You didn't open it, did you?" Fand asked, slightly worried. Miele just frowned at Fand. Fand wilted. "Sorry," she muttered.

"You really need to get out more," Miele said, shaking her digital head. "Get a love life of your own instead of obsessing about everyone else's."

Fand's eyes widened in panic. "No!" she squeaked. "No, I think I'm good!"

"You have no idea how relationships actually work, do you?" Miele asked.

"I'm not talking about this," Fand said, shifting Miele to her secondary monitor.

"Hey!" Miele remarked as the cursor dragged her across the screen.

"Not talking about this," Fand repeated.

"Fine," Miele said. "But we'll come back to this eventually. Do you hear me, Fand?"

"I finally see why I keep getting stuffed in the fridge," Fand muttered as she ignored her new assistant's nagging.

27.1 (Awesomedude17)

The Wizards of the Black Circle fled the horde of giant hornets that tried to attack them.

"What are those things?" Bloom asked in horror.

"Asian Giant Hornets. Big, scary, deadly, and bugs. After learning about these things, I knew that I had to try these things out." Stella flashed a manic grin.

"Stella, you need a time out." Flora said sternly.

"After these guys' skin melt off from the venom."

"That wasn't a suggestion." Flora grasped Stella on a pressure point and knocked her out.

In retrospect, she probably should've waited until they were out of the range of angry giant hornets.

27.2 (Awesomedude17)

"I kinda expected you to be a vegetarian."

Flora looked over to the King of Gerudos: Ganondorf in curious confusion.

"I'll be honest with you, it's easy to assume that just because you love nature, that means you're a vegetarian or vegan. News flash, no it's not. Nature is basically a cycle of living and dying. You've probably seen Lion King before."

"Ah, yes. The Circle of Life."

"And let's be honest, I can eat meat without being seen as a hypocrite because I know that I can eat meat and use it as fuel for my body just as easily as I can do the same with a salad or kumquats. As long as the animal died humanely, I'm not feeling guilt over eating a burger, protein-style."

"You have a point. It does make the people who argue that meat is murder seem unreasonable though."

"Everyone likes what they like. I'm not judging them on their diet. I'm judging them on their behavior."

"I s- wait a minute. Aren't you a vampire too?"

"And a Chaos Goddess. How does that matter over me not being vegetarian?"

"Don't you have an urge to drink blood?"

"I've got IV bags of the stuff in my pocket from willing donors, mostly my friends."

"O... K...?"

"Hey G, y' done talkin' t' Flora 'ere?" Commander Badass said as he walked out of the buffet with giant stacks of steaks. "I need some help carryin' this stack'a food 'ere."

"Yeah, I am, Commander. I'm done for sure." Ganondorf quietly got up.

Flora silently shook her head. She always had a guilty pleasure of making people cringe when she explained her less than savory side's habits.

27.3 (Awesomedude17)

It became apparent that someone had a psychotic break.

That wasn't unusual. Loopers tend to have those when they go through Loops where they had been beaten down repeatedly.

No, the insanity came from the *actions* they do during said psychotic break.

For a certain someone's case, it ended up being relatively tame.

Valtor had transformed into a demon again. Flora was Awake. There was one other Looper, but none of them were her friends. And she gave up on out of Loop powers for Lent.

Flora could still easily wipe the floor with Valtor, blindfolded and near blackout drunk. Unfortunately for you, someone beat her to said beatdown.

The other Looper made himself known as he burst through the doors on a blazing bear wearing nothing more than a loincloth, charging at Valtor and wailing on him with a barbarian club. The bear promptly smacked the guy down to the floor, and decided to fart in his face as the man jumped off and began to burn the entire place down.

And all the while, Flora kept a stoic face as everyone not Valtor, the man and the bear evacuated the fire that consumed everything.

Eventually, the mystery man rode out on his burning bear, manic grin on his face.

Flora shook her head and sighed. Link had a psychotic break, and became a bear riding pyromaniac.

27.4 (Awesomedude17)

WARNING! UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS DETECTED!

Bruce groaned as he looked over to wherever the source of the hack was. Few Loopers really tend to completely cover their tracks when they believe that they can hack *his* computers, and this time was only different in that they at least tried to access it from a vague location, in this case, a random coffee shop in Italy.

After suiting up and taking flight, he knew that some Looper was trying to be clever.

"Okay, so what does Bruce have on us?" Musa asked Techna.

"Let's see. Flora Victoria. Anchor to Alfea. Fairy-Vampire-Chaos God hybrid. Highly skilled in the usage and maintenance of firearms. Has a large network of relations including Shepard, the Hellsing Loopers, Outworld and so on. Affable, and morally strong. Primary means of restraint in case of Fell Mood, (I didn't know Batman liked Dwarf Fortress,) use custom stake made of... Hold on, Flora does this seem familiar to you?"

Flora looked over the description of her countermeasure and noticed something.

"Yeah. It's just like that stake DIO tried to stab me with."

"And something that was supposed to be top secret until he managed to access the files while I was recovering from Bane's

backbreaker that one Loop." Batman said, causing everyone to meet his disapproving glare.

"Oh shit, Batman!" Stormy pointed at the Dark Knight.

Techna stood up.

"I'm sorry Bruce, I just-"

"Not one more word. I'd rather you get rid of everything from those files you stole, and not bother me anymore."

"Hold on. You were planning on staking me?" Flora shouted.

"In the event of you becoming a threat to Yggdrasil, yes. I even discussed the plan with Clark."

"And he was reluctant?" Techna guessed.

"Yes."

"And you've got some more for the rest of us?"

"The files are outdated anyway. They're from 2 eons ago, but you'd better prepare yourself just in case. Now, the files?"

"Fine, deleted." Musa said as she moved the display to Batman's view, confirming that the recycling bin was emptying the files for the documents stolen.

"Good. If I catch you doing this again, that computer isn't going to last much longer."

"Whatever you say... you disappearing bat-suited loner." Flora blinked.

"Geez, he's creepy." Darcy noted.

"He's creepy?" Icy replied with sarcasm.

Flora sighed. She now knew how DIO got that particular idea.

Batman's paranoia isn't doing him wonders.

27.5

"Results inconclusive," a cheery electronic voice announced.

"Again?" Techna demanded, glaring at her Pocket supercomputer, frustrated by the lose of another hundred loops worth of work. "Alright, *fine* . Try recording nine hundred and twelve. Cross reference with previous analyses. Run recording three hundred sixty thousand and forty three dash M in parallel. Cross reference with all previous analyses under the subheading MTI. Compare with recordings under the headings MTV, TTE, FTE, and MTE. Execute."

"Estimated time to completion, twelve hundred years," the electronic voice responded.

"Great..." Techna groaned, putting the terminal back in her pocket. "I need a better computer..."

"I'm not sure that's possible," Musa said, plunking down on the grass next to Techna. "By the way, you're freaking the mundanes."

Techna looked around at the non-loopers walking through Alfea's quad. She was definitely getting some odd looks. She shrugged. "We're not doing a baseline loop anyways, so I don't really care," she said. "We were going to draw attention anyways."

"True," Musa said. "So, what's got you so frustrated?"

"Baseline," Techna said.

"Baseline?" Musa asked. "I'd have thought you'd have figured out everything there was to know about baseline by now. Or is this something about the weird variable baseline thing Fand set up?"

"No," Techna said, lying back on the grass to stare at the clouds. "This is from the stable part of baseline. You remember how Flora got her Enchantix?"

"She jumped into that river to get Miele back," Musa said. "So what?"

"You remember what the water of that river does?"

"It turns back time for whatever it... touches... oh." Musa blinked several times. "It didn't do anything to Flora. Or Miele. Did it?"

"Not in baseline," Techna said. "There have been a few variants where it did, but they're just that: Variants. Flora and Miele were both completely submerged in the river. They should have been de-aged out of existence. Instead, they were more at risk of drowning than anything else. Something's not right there."

"Uh... Maybe Flora cast a spell?" Musa offered.

"I checked for that," Techna said. "Nothing. Miele didn't do it either. It just... didn't affect them."

"I got nothing," Musa said.

"Neither does my computer," Techna grumbled. "I've been trying to figure this out for nearly a million loops at this point. So far I've gotten thousands of inconclusive results."

"Maybe it's because Flora's the anchor?" Musa suggested.

"Maybe, but I don't think so," Techna said. "Hopefully we'll find out when my computer finishes."

"Maybe her family's just immune to time magic," Musa said. "And maybe that's why Fand made her the Anchor in the first place."

"I highly doubt that," Techna said, fiddling with her ring. The slight feeling in the back of her mind letting her know Flora's location was a reassuring presence in her life.

"Well I'm out of ideas," Musa said. "I'm going to get lunch."

"I should probably do that too," Techna said.

"Well, let's go then," Musa said, jackknifing to her feet.

"Showoff," Techna said, standing up more normally.

"Hey, I've been practicing break dancing with Aisha," Musa said. "It's fun, you should try it."

"I'll pass," Techna said. "Lunch?"

"Lunch."

27.6

Diaspro watched the display of heroics and skill put on for the Day of the Royals. Red Fountain's students were definitely skilled, though it wasn't anything she hadn't seen before. Admittedly she rarely saw it all the way through, but this time was different. Mostly because the usual cause of the abbreviated festivities was sitting next to her as her "plus one".

"You really do have the best seats in the house," Bloom said.

"You didn't know that?" Diaspro asked. "With how old you are, I figured-."

"No, I never replaced you," the red-head said. "Kind of surprising, actually."

"That is strange."

"I blame Fand," Bloom said.

"Is she really that bad?" Diaspro asked.

"Yes," Bloom said, then relented. "Okay, no, she's not that bad. She cares about us, and does her best to help us, but she's so annoying that it's hard to remember that sometimes."

"Got it," Diaspro said. "Sort of like Unawake Techna?"

"Techna's not- Huh. You make a good point."

"Of course I do, I'm the fairy of Gemlight." This last was delivered in a bitter tone of voice.

"Hey, stop it," Bloom said, gently whacking Diaspro's shoulder. "I already forgave you for that."

"Sorry, still brings up memories," Diaspro said. "Oh, they're about to come out!"

"Ten bucks on his jaw dropping," Bloom said.

"I'm not taking that bet," Diaspro said.

The four Specialists stepped into the ring as the dragons were released. Timmy, Riven, and Brandon promptly set about taming their respective beasts. Meanwhile Sky was so busy starring that he didn't even notice when his dragon smacked him across the ring with its tail.

"Did you see his *face* ?" Diaspro choked out through her laughter. "That was *amazing* !"

"I know!" Bloom responded, laughing just as hard. "And then the dragon hit him and it was great!"

"We should do this more often," Diaspro said, brushing aside a gem that had formed from her mirthful tears.

"Definitely," Bloom said before she hiccuped out a burst of fire. "I never thought I'd say this, but Diaspro? You have the *best* ideas."

"I'm just sorry we didn't get a picture," Diaspro said. "That face!"

"Don't worry, we can just do it again!" Bloom said. "We can create an entire album of pictures of that face!"

"Do you think Techna would be willing to help?" Diaspro asked.

"Probably," Bloom said. "Oh wow, this is great."

"Wait wait, he's coming here," Diaspro said. "Do you want to start things off, or should I?"

"You go first," Bloom said. "Let his fiancee dump him first, then I can drop the whole 'Lost Princess of Domino' bombshell on his head."

"You are positively evil, Bloom," Diaspro giggled. "Let's do it."

27.7 (lord Martiya)

Diaspro had to admit that Magix was a nice place. She still loved her realm on Eraklyon, but Magix had its own beauty, a magical feeling unparalleled everywhere, and, lacking the politicking of her homeworld, was far calmer. It was a place where she could drop her guard. That was why she had fallen down when Stormy had tackle-hugged her.

"Welcome to the Loops, fourth Trix!" Stormy said as her sisters pried her off the princess.

"What?"

"Long story short, we always liked you as much as we could like a fairy, even in baseline." Darcy explained.

"One that isn't Musa." pointed out Icy.

"Right. So, considering our shared enemy and the fact you had a decent reason comparable to our old insanity, we sort of considered

you a honorary Trix."

"And no "I'm a fairy, not a witch", all you need to be a Trix is the others saying you are." Stormy continued. "And giving a lesson to the kids that target your breakfast, we'll explain later."

"Oh... OK." the princess answered as soon as she processed what had just happened. "So-Wait, fourth Trix? I recall Bloom telling me a story about four witch sisters..."

"I suppose it's nice seeing Diaspro making friends." Flora said. "But isn't a bit overkill?"

"Flora, it's MITZI!" Bloom replied. "Pop corn?"

As they talked, Mitzi ran by, screaming in terror as the Trix and Diaspro, all dressed in stereotypical witch garbs, chased their "summoner".

"WHY DID I USE THAT STORY OF THE THREE WITCH SISTERS FOR THE PRANK?!" the bully screamed.

27.8 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro stared at the dark haired young man over the breakfast table, he stared back and sipped his drink. 'Their' father puttered away in the kitchen less than a metre away.

The young man in question was her brother, according to her loop memories, but now that she was Awake, she really couldn't see any resemblance between him and the man in the kitchen, though she'd felt two Pings.

"You ever have those mornings where you wake up feeling kind of loopy," she asked him. His eyes narrowed, he tilted his head subtly towards the door. She nodded.

The pair said their goodbyes and made their way outside. Diaspro strapped on a pair of roller skates before following her new brother onto the road.

"So..." He swung his leg over his bicycle and started pedalling slowly, letting her keep pace easily.

"Carl Grimes, Walking Dead loop, visiting Anchor. You?"

"Diaspro, Winx Club loop, visiting looper."

"Win- we had a trio of witches from your loop a while back... interesting ladies."

"The Trix? That's one way to put it," she smiled at him, he grinned back. "So, what do you suppose there is to do in this loop?"

"Not sure, but the ghost of our in loop dead mother was in the kitchen during breakfast."

"What? How did I miss that?"

"No idea. YUKI!" Carl waved to a silver haired boy waiting for them at the corner, just like his loop memories told him he did everyday.

The new boy was magical. Diaspro wasn't surprised, she'd seen plenty of anime during her hub loop, the 'new kid' was always relevant to the plot.

"Hand over the cards!" She rolled her eyes at he's aggression, frowning harshly when she realised he was preparing to get physical.

"Try it, and I will knock you on your ass, you little brat."

He tried it.

And stopped after two steps, The Wood wrapping him in her branches. Diaspro flipped her hair smugly, then scowled at the two

young men who'd come to stand by the fence line. She gestured to the new kid in 'seriously not gonna help?' manner.

Carl shrugged, "you're handling it."

Diaspro scoffed and turned her attention back to her hostage.

"Now, New Kid, here's how this is going to work!" The boy paled.

Syaoran slid up beside her, glaring at Eriol.

"I don't trust the new kid." Diaspro raised an eyebrow at the boy.

"Hey Mr Kettle, the pot called, he says you're black!"

"What?"

"Never mind, I was just remembering when you first came here. But you're not wrong about that guy, he is one creepy little fu- … kid. One creepy little kid"

Diaspro tried shaking the water from her sleeves. It was ineffective.

"Who ever is doing this has to be powerful," Kero said from beneath the towel Tomoyo was using to dry the guardian. Diaspro froze, then slowly turned to the tiny creature with a 'Seriously?' expression plastered across her face.

"Oh, I wonder who it could possibly be(!) I have no idea, its such a mystery(!) Surely, no new people have recently entered our lives, like say, a mysterious transfer student, way too interested in my life(!)" Yue looked askance at her, then raised an eyebrow at how sarcastic she was being.

"Oh come on Yue, it's totally the new guy, its not a coincidence it started around the same time he arrived." Yue said nothing, he was too stoic for such things. "Urgh."

27.9 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro stood in the doorway of the ship as the soldiers fired on the monsters below, through the dark rain and army of decay bugs, she could make out Sky, fighting back to back with Brandon. All around them, the situation seemed more and more dire, students and teachers alike cried out in pain as they were struck down.

From the cup in her hand, a loud slurping noise issued forth, as Diaspro's milkshake at last ran dry. With a quiet humph, she grabbed the straw, turning it to lick the last of the ice cream from the end before setting the cup and straw down.

"Better get to it I suppose," she took a step out of the vehicle and fell, transforming as she went. Rising back into the air she gather her energy and flung it wide. "AMBER REIGN!" Every creature it encountered was encased in a thick layer of amber, the larger monsters scattered as the amber divided them back into their weaker, base insect forms.

Silence descended over the area.

Everyone waited with bated breath.

"So, if you boys are done here, I'm going to go check on Alfea. 'Kay, bye!" Diaspro teleported out.

And reappeared on Earth, in an ice cream store.

"Hey, can I grab another milkshake please." Her periods gave her the worst 'sweet' and 'dairy' cravings in this loop.

Flora slid onto the bench by the school's well, sidling up to Diaspro who sat, nonchalantly, readin the latest copy of teen fairy.

"So, Diaspro, what's new with you?"

Diaspro continued to read the magazine as she replied. "Not much, I'm not loving the recent photos of me in Teen Fairy though, and really, Eraklyon's relief efforts for the quake victims on Bordos, being completely overshadowed by the fact I choose to wear lace up boots to the on site aid camp? Ugh, priorities!"

"Right, actually tragic, *but* speaking of quakes though..."

"Mmmm?"

"You wouldn't happen to know anything about Darkar's lair being crumpled up into a lump of hyper compressed rock the size of car with him still in it, would?"

"I've been helping with relief efforts all week, how would I possibly know anything about Darkar's lair?"

"Right," Flora fixed Diaspro with a look, the fairy of Gemlight grinned as she flipped the page.

Diaspro flung open the doors to Valtor's lair, he and the Trix whirled to look at her, all of them shocked.

"Who are you, to dare enter my abode?"

"I am Princess Diaspro of Eraklyon, and you, you're Valtor correct?"

"I am; now that I know *who* you are, *what* are you doing here?"

The Trix looked ready to attack her, just waiting for his orders.

"I heard you were taking on... assistants, I also heard they were getting some very nice new powers, and I thought I might hand in my application to join you."

"And why would you do that, Fairy?"

"Simple, there's a fairy who stole my fiancé, and I. want her. to PAY. You seemed like a good way to get some revenge."

"And what makes you think he'd want you?" Icy sneered, Diaspro turned to her with a smirk.

"Because, *witch* , I can go where you can't without causing a scene. For example:" Diaspro pulled out an orb of glittering light from her Pocket, "this is the ancient Fairy spell 'Fairy Glitter,' it's power is unparalleled, and I managed to take it from one of the most secret and secure vaults in the magic dimension. No one even knows its missing!" She let out a smug laugh.

Diaspro held it out for Valtor to take, which he did with glee. Rolling it between his palms he stared into it's depths.

"I've never even heard of this spell, what is it? What does it do?" He drew it closer to his face.

"Glitter Bomb," Diaspro said with a snap of her fingers. The glitter bomb exploded, covering Valtor and half the room. When the particles settled, Diaspro and the Trix saw what was left of Valtor. The exchanged horrified (amused) looks.

"Eeeeewwwwww."

Some hours earlier

"So I was thinking, Valtor is basically a spark of the Dragon Fire tainted by dark magic right? So like a 'cursed' Flame?"

"I guess?" Bloom Shrugged.

"Why, what are you thinking Diaspro?" Flora looked over, curious.

"I'm thinking I'm going to need a crap tonne of Fairy Dust, and glitter."

"So, I don't think you've had a chance to mess with the wizards of the Black Circle yet," Disapro perked up as Flora's voice came over the phone, not even bothering with salutations.

"Not since that one loop where you were stealth," Diaspro admitted.

"Mmm, yeah, but that wasn't really dealing with them, they're about to show up at Alfea for the first time, you want a shot at them? Other wise I'm probably just going to drop a piano on their heads again."

Diaspro didn't reply, instead she teleported directly to Alfea, managing to land right in front of Flora.

"Nice aim."

"Thanks, I'm hanging up now."

Diaspro was sitting on one of the gardens' retaining walls when the Wizards appeared, inspecting her nails, she'd found a fault along the edge of her shellac, honestly, she'd only had them done three hours ago.

'Oh well,' she sighed to herself as she stood, 'that's what I get for going for a more reasonable price.'

"Excise you, sirs, but you are trespassing on school property."

"Oh look, a fairy wants to play with us." Diaspro scowled.

"You know what I've always found really annoying?" She asked, closing the distance with furious strides.

"What's that little fairy?"

"People always assume I got my position on the royal guard by batting my Pretty, pretty eyelashes." With no further warning she summoned The Shield and The Sword cards to her hands, ramming Shield into Gantlos' face before running him through. Pulling Sword free she let Shot run along the blade and dive straight into Duman.

A step and a spin and Anagan's head went sailing clear from his body, Shadow retreating from where it had been binding him in place.

"How dare you!" Orgon yelled at her, she hissed back.

"NO! How. Dare. YOU! You and your little 'circle' have terrorised fairies long enough!" Dash let her close the gap between them before he could blink, knocking his half formed spell aside with Shield, she drove Sword home.

"Aw, what's wrong, I thought you wanted to play with the little fairy?" The leader of the Wizards hit the ground with a thump, Diaspro flicked the blood from Sword's blade and disappeared her Cards back into her Pocket.

"I'm starting to see why you're still on the Watch List, you are really vicious. Also, where did you learn that?"

"I was serious, I was trained before I became part of the guard, I didn't just bat my eyes and 'poof,' special liaison... also I was in middle earth for a while and they really like their melee combat..."

27.10 (Jeanne Summers)

'No wonder you're still on the list, you're vicious.'

'You're not the first looper to kill someone.'

'- keep an eye on her, she might not be as stable as we think-'

Diaspro spun, looking around the corridor for the source of the voices, but she was alone in the Red Fountain hallway. Pulling her cape tighter around herself to ward off her unease, she continued on her way, eyes still darting around for any sign of life.

She reached a door, she had to go through it, there was something waiting for her on the other side, something important. Reaching out she placed both hands upon the door, flinching back at their sticky feel, pulling back further she grimaced as her hands came away stained with red.

With distaste, she put her hands to the doors once again, and pushed, shoving the doors open. They stopped moving, she stopped being able to move them, when they were just far enough away for her to squeeze through. Her cloak was jostled from her shoulders, her front smeared with the same sticky redness – a still wet varnish of some sort? - as her hands.

She stumbled on the sandy ground of the Red Fountain arena, the whispering sounds of a horrified crowd echoed through the empty space.

'No,' she thought, 'not quite empty.' Dozens of metres away, someone sat on the ground, something laying beside them. Diaspro moved closer, her voice failing her as she tried to cry out to the stranger. When she was almost upon the stranger, they turned to her. They had her face.

"I did this," Diaspro whispered, turning her head back to the dead body beside her. Bloom's body.

Colour and sound seemed to dial all the way up, Sky screamed nearby. Her hands shook.

People screamed as the ground shook.

For a moment, Diaspro could feel her power sinking into the ground, through sand and soil and stone, deeper and deeper and further and

further, through and across the strata of Magix. She screamed, tearing at herself with bloody hands.

The planet screamed with her, tearing itself apart as her magic went as insane as she was.

Diaspro jolted awake with a startled yelp, clawing at herself and her sheets, breath coming in heavy pants. A scream built in her throat as she kicked her way free of the sheets.

'It wasn't real, that isn't what happened! I don't have the power to do that, my power *couldn't* do that!' She fell as she scrambled from her bed, tripping and running and crawling her way to her private bathroom.

She slapped at the wall until the light turned on, turning the tap with shaking hands. The water spilled from her fingers as she tried to cup it, and as she leaned down to splash what she could on her face, she stopped.

Millimetre by millimetre her head raised, until she made eye contact with her reflection. But it wasn't her reflection in the mirror.

A stonework mockery of her stared back. A layer of Peach Selenite flaking off to reveal Agrellite skin and Amblygonite eyes, Sulphur strands for hair, cracks spread across her reflections face, a terrifying light peeking through the damaged surface. It spoke with a grumbling, distorted voice.

"This is what you are now, accept it." Diaspro shook her head in disbelief. "ACCEPT IT!" the reflection creature slammed its hands – covered in that sticky red – against the mirror glass, sending cracks spider webbing out. Diaspro jolted back in fright and

startled awake.

A sobbing edge to her breaths, she slowly, deliberately push her sheets back. Step by step, she walked to the bathroom, and turned on the light. With defiance – and fear – she locked eyes with her reflection.

It stared back, afraid and defiant, clammy flesh and lank hair.

Her knees buckled and she fell to the floor with relief, letting the tears spill from her eyes.

27.11 (Awesomedude17)

Diaspro knew she'd Awake in some strange places. It was established ever since Bilbo explained the concept of Fused Loop with her.

What she wasn't expecting was various explosions from above the bunker she was stuck in, alien creatures trying their best to kill everything, soldiers killing anyone not them, and the ramblings of someone walking down the hallway.

Alright, Loop Memories. Sky broke up with me, same old, same old. Decided to get doctorate in theoretical physics to take my mind off of him? Made enemies with... Gordon Freeman? Who's Gordon?

"-and then there's the fact that the Dude and Rick decided to experiment with monkeys. I honestly don't know what they're expecting when they give them intelligence, feed them crack and arm them with lightsabers, but I can certainly say that it's not going to be fun, or maybe it is. I'd have to see the footage of the results. I'd think it'd make a good snuff-comedy. I'd call it 'Crack Monkey Geniuses Fire Guns: Now With 100% Less Poo.' That'd be awesome." Gordon immediately noticed an understandably confused Diaspro. "Oh hey, it's Dr. Isis! Hey, Diaspro! I can't believe you're alive. Jesus Christ is everyone here but me and you an idiot. You mind following me to salvation that is the surface, and then have some 'Thank God we're alive sex' after all this?"

Diaspro's Loop Memories kicked in and she hit Dr. Freeman in the nads.

"Ohhh... yeah, I'll take that as a no then. You're still hot, single and smarter than 99% of everyone here."

"Shut up. You have a gun, lead me out of this mess."

"So yes on the rescue, no on the sex. Alright, I can live with that. I mean, you don't have a suit or anything... I'm well Anchored as is, but you-"

"I'm Loopy. You have a spare?"

"Oh. Well... this makes the previous times I flirted with you awkward. Hold on." Gordon retrieved a female copy of the HEV suit and gave it to Diaspro, who turned invisible and began to put the suit on, leaving Gordon annoyed.

"Oh, you tease."

"It's not teasing if I don't want to tease you."

"Well I beg to differ. That said, I still think that this is the start of a beautiful friendship between the two of us, where you use whatever Loop powers you got to kill aliens and military fuckheads, and I shoot them with guns, and whack them with crowbars."

"That assumes that you'd give a reason to befriend you. My Loop Memories show you sexually harassing me since we were at MIT. I think I actually gave a restraining order on you last week."

"Don't remind me, Unawake me felt blue-balled by that."

"God, please let this end quickly." Diaspro's hand met her face as she said that line under her breath.

Adminspace: You brought this on yourself, Fand.

27.1: There are some really scary insects out there.

27.2: I'm not sure vegetarianism would hold the same appeal for Flora that it would for most people. After all, she can talk to plants. Animals, not so much.

27.3: I... I don't really have a response for that. Moving on.

27.4: Well done Bats. Well done.

27.5: This has always puzzled me.

27.6: Bonding over Bad Boyfriend Bashing.

27.7: This makes entirely too much sense...

27.8: Diaspro crosses over with/as Card Captor Sakura.

27.9: Figures she'd take a turn dealing with the plot. It's pretty much a Looper right of passage.

27.10: Might I suggest additional therapy, Diaspro?

27.11: Yeah, that's most people's reactions to looping Gordan Freeman.

So turns out I was wrong about the new chapter being delayed. A new looper and a new author tends to push things forward a bit. So, new chapter a bit early. Yay!

Chapter 28

28.1 (Jeanne Summers)

"Oh come on! Can you not read the speed limit? You *can* go faster! Sunday Driver! It's Tuesday!" Bloom snorted at Diaspro's ranting, the blonde glanced at her from the corner of her eye. "Oh hush, don't tell me you're not getting annoyed."

"Go around," Aisha called from the back of the Winx caravan.

"I can't! The lines on the road are very clearly not over taking lines, and the visibility is crappy anyway! Do you want me to cause an accident?"

"Hang on, my GPS says there's an overtaking lane coming up in... twenty minutes." Tecna held out her hand held where Diaspro could see it in the rear view mirror.

Bloom traced their route on the map with her finger. "Okay, I found it, it's just before our turn off, so is it really worth over taking the car in front of us if we're turning off right after?"

"It is if it turns out they're turning off too, and we end up stuck behind them even longer," Musa pointed out.

"Yes, exactly," Diaspro agreed with a furious nod.

Roxy and Stella rolled over in their blanket puddles, to tired to deal with anything yet, Flora rolled her eyes.

"It's alright Diaspro, as long as we get there, it doesn't matter how long it takes."

The fairy of Gemlight huffed, muttering to Bloom, "she says that, but *she's* not the one stuck *driving,* behind someone going less than 70% of the speed limit."

Several hours later, (and a few driver trade out,s which clearly highlighted the difference in Aisha and Diaspro's driving styles,) the eight women were pulling up in front of an arch of pink, painted wood, the wing shaped, wire work gates already open for them.

"Finally!" Stella cheered at the sight, "be honest Alfea Summer Camp, you missed us!"

"Hey, does something look off to anyone else?" Roxy leaned between the two front seats, steadying herself on the dash board.

"It looks kind of... run down," Bloom traced the welcome arc with a judging eye, taking note of the flaking paint, the rust spots on the gate, the slight droop in the fence.

"Well, it's been a year since the camp had visitors, of course the maintenance is a little lacking, that's why we're here a week before opening, to get it back in shape."

Diaspro shook her head at Stella's assumption, frowning as she edged the caravan down the entry way, noting the bumps in the road.

"It might have been six years since we were all camp goers here, but Roxy's right, there's something off," Flora peered out the windows at the forest, "something more than a year of neglect."

"Girls, welcome back. Thank you all so much for volunteering as camp counselors this summer. I can't tell you how much it means to me to have you here." Faragonda looked sad, Musa noted, despite the welcoming smile.

"Of course Ms Faragonda, this camp meant so much to us as children, its so wonderful to be back," Bloom stepped forward to hug the old woman. It was true, in their loop memories.

The girls had all been campers at the Alfea Summer Camp, and they had all enjoyed their time there. Summer activities, friendly rivalries with Cloud Tower and Red Fountain across the lake, years of memories of this place.

The eight spent the night in their caravan, squashed together in a familiar way, this was hardly the first time they'd gone road tripping in the 'Winx Mobile.'

"We all know what this is right?" Flora asked into the darkness. Agreeing noises came from the other seven. Tecna summarised, just to make sure they were all on the same page.

"This is a baseline variation, instead of Fairy School, Alfea is a Summer Camp, and judging by the sudden need for unpaid volunteers, and the run down nature of the camp itself, the camp is in financial trouble. We're in a 'save the Summer camp' narrative."

"Right, so how do we save the camp? My family is super wealthy," Stella rolled over to sit up, "but a one time influx of cash isn't going to help past the summer."

"We need to remind people why this camp is worth paying for, why its worth attending," Roxy propped her head up on her hands.

"Alright Winx, how do we do that?"

"We get our fairy-godmother on. Duh."

With their magic still in play, revitalising the camp was easy. When they needed new wood for broken fences, or the docks, or even the cabins, Flora asked the forest to provide, and it did. Diaspro was able to clean up the ragged edges, the flaking paint and the rusting metal with a good sand blasting.

Tecna and Musa took care of fixing up, and upgrading the electronics in the camp. Roxy and Aisha made sure the athletic activities were safe and up to scratch, while Bloom and Stella took care of ensuring the arts and crafts supplies were plentiful.

Weeds were weeded, spiders relocated, events were planned.

"I think we're ready," Faragonda looked out over her camp, trying not to cry at the sight of it in top condition for the first time on almost five years.

"Not quite," Diaspro called, carrying a long bag over her shoulder, "we need a photograph to commemorate the start of our summer."

The girls gathered around Fargonda on the steps of the office cabin, while Diaspro set up the camera on its tripod.

"Timer set, okay quick, into position!" Diaspro hurried over, tripping into Bloom as she tried to ascend the steps and turn at the same time. The girls went down like bowling pins, leaving only Faragonda untouched on the top step. One by one they began snickering, the camera's shutter closing over the scene of the nine laughing happily.

Stella almost fell off the couch as she bolted up right. "Turn the radio up!" Musa frown and complied.

' *It is unkown where the two men are now, only that they were last seen-* ' the rest of the Winx clued in to what had Stella frowning, '- *as of 8:30 local time, Darkar Pheonix and Valtor Dracis have become the county's most wanted. They are both considered to be extremely dangerous, and should be assumed to be armed. If any sightings occur, they should be reported to authorities, immediately.* '

"They're coming here," Bloom's expression darkened, "this is still a Winx Club loop."

"Which means we'll run in to them sooner or later," Flora agreed.

"So how do we protect the kids if they come here?" Roxy leaned forward, worry evident on her face.

"We need to be able to keep track of the kids at all times, we can't afford the occasional child wandering off." Bloom looked at her friends, in their normal baseline, they'd know when and where the threat was coming from, no small children to risk.

"Well it not like we can 'chip' the kids," Diaspro said, "they aren't pets."

"But we could!" Tecna sat up right, grabbing her computer, "we have to give the kids bracelets when they arrive, so they know which cabin they're assigned to , if we made them waterproof tracking devices to boot..."

"That's kind of illegal..." Aisha said, "... can you get them to read bio-signs, so we can tell if the kids are distressed. Just in case those two show up within the camp grounds, where the kids should be, and start harassing our campers."

"How about a security fence, we can probably rig something to signal if something, or someone, bigger than a child wanders through it, so hopefully they won't make it to the kids." Stella suggested.

"Communication devices, we'll all need to be reachable if an emergency happens. Maybe something like we used during the Sirenix quest." The fairies kept brainstorming late into the night.

"I thought you girls were finished with camp preparations," Faragonda frowned as she watched her counselors attach some kind of bird house like device to a tree, some of the others were placing stone shaped devices around the cabin. She'd noticed the girls heading out an about with things since late yesterday.

Diaspro and Roxy rode up from the entrance on the camp horses.

"We're all set along the boundary line."

"And these are the last of the camp site devices..." Bloom stepped down from her branch, onto the back of Diaspro's horse. "When you're ready Tecna!" Diaspro twisted to pull a face at the red head, who grinned back cheekily, and slid off the horse.

"We're online, registering eight signals, who has Faragonda's device?"

"I do," Stella chirped as she stepped forward to place a bracelet on Faragonda's wrist.

"And that makes nine, sensors by the front gates are showing movement, looks like buses."

"Girls?" Faragonda gave her best 'explain now' frown.

"We heard on the radio two nights ago, a prisoner transport rolled and two men escaped custody." Stella explained, "the police don't know where they are, but we thought, better safe than sorry, so we've set up a few extra security measures."

"But, the cost..."

"Don't worry about it, Daddy's bank account covered it easily. This place meant so much to us a kids, and it means so much that we get to help other kids make fond memories here. We can't *not* do everything in our power to keep the place safe."

Any further discussion was cut off by the arrival of the buses.

"Alright girls, its show time!"

With Bloom, Stella and Musa on Arts and Crafts, and Aisha, Roxy and Flora taking care of outdoor activities, Tecna and Diaspro were left to drift between groups, helping who ever needed it. Diaspro had

the extra task of taking photos for the Summer Memory book, and Tecna kept an eye on the security feeds.

All eight, plus Ms Faragonda, rotated through kitchen duties.

For a week everything was ideal, they'd even handled four cases of homesickness with aplomb.

Then, during a nightly camp fire, security sensors alerted them to something, or someone, moving through the edge of the security zone.

The group split up, Flora, Diaspro, Roxy and Aisha heading into the forest to track down the intrusion. The others remaining at camp to protect the kids.

Several hundred metres into the forest Tenca called to investigation team.

"We've had a second breach in the security line, it looks like whatever it was, was just passing through."

"Do you want us to head back to camp?" Flora asked.

"Wait, which direction were they headed?" Diaspro cut of any reply Tecna was about to make.

"What, why, if they're not headed to camp, it might not be them right?" Roxy looked confused.

"When we were planning for this, we forgot something very important," Diaspro kept her comm channel open, so she wouldn't have to explain it again to the four back at camp. "In baseline, Darkar and Valtor don't attack Alfea first."

"They go after Cloud Tower," Aisha swore as it clicked.

The sound of Tecna swearing came back over the line. "If it is those two that breached the line, and they keep heading in their current

direction, it will take them straight to the Cloud Tower Summer Camp."

"Transform," Flora ordered, letting her power consume her for the fraction of a second it took to change, spreading her power out through the forest, seeking the two men.

Amongst the tree tops, the four fairies hovered, watching the pair of criminals as they made their way through the underbrush.

"Its them," Roxy spoke quietly into her comm. Back at camp Tecna picked up the office phone and called the police.

"How should we handle this? Because I have a Card that could knock them out." Diaspro pulled Sleep from her Pocket.

"But how do we explain knocking them out without force?" Aisha poked a hole in the plan.

"We use the forest," Flora said, like it was obvious. "The no go zone by the waterfall just outside the camp border, why is it off limits?"

"Because the plants there are... oh," Roxy caught on to Flora's plan a mere second ahead of the other two.

Flora, Roxy, Aisha and Diapro had been chosen as the field unit because the source of their powers were all around them in the forest, which made them the best ambush team for the job. Between them, they managed to turn Darkar and Valtor around, tripping them, harassing them and confusing them, until they walked off the ledge by the waterfall and fell the short distance into a patch of stinging nettles that had grown through a poison ivy vine.

Screaming and swearing, the pair of men fumbled their way out of the plant trap, and Diaspro froze, catching sight of the gun in Valtor's belt.

"Problem," she whispered into her comm, "Valto has a gun."

"Damn, I didn't want to resort to plan B, but if you can make the shot..." Diaspro nodded in response to tecna's unspoken order, even though the others couldn't see her.

During her time in Middle Earth, Diaspro had learnt to use a bow, she'd mastered it, as much as anyone who wasn't an elf could. She practised, on and off during the loops, but she did prefer the sword to the bow. Pulling one of the camp bows and quivers from her Pocket, Diaspro raised her arm, sighting her shot along the shaft of the arrow.

And waited, arrow resting un-drawn as the two men began to argue.

The moment came, Valtor reached for his gun and Diaspro drew and released, the arrow lodging in the shoulder of his gun arm. He screamed and went down. Darkar looked around, then fell as Aisha released a bola into him, wrapping him in cord and weights.

Diaspro really had to ask the princess of Andros where she learnt that particular skill.

The two men were wrapped in blankets and ropes, the gun confiscated into a satchel, and the fairy quartet dragged them to the nearest trail, letting the group back at camp know their location and condition.

A small number of police officers met them along the trail, taking over the transport of the men. Diaspro gave her statement, the amended non-magical version of events, to the police, preparing herself for the legal repercussions of shooting a man with a bow and arrow.

"I wouldn't worry too much, given the nature of their crimes, shooting him was a clear cut case of self-defence," the officer smiled at her. Diaspro gave a relieved sigh and let herself be pulled into a hug by the rest of girls.

"What am I supposed to tell my campers, or their parents?" Faragonda asked, later that night when the campers had gone off to bed.

"Do you have to tell them anything? Its not like roaming criminals is a normal occurrence, and they weren't on camp grounds for more than ten minutes. They didn't get anywhere near the campers and they weren't even coming here." Stella patted her soothingly on the back while Musa brought over a cup of tea.

"You're right, its over, everyone is safe, no need to cause a commotion now."

And so, the capture of two fugitives remained an obscure fact in the history of the camp. The story of how the camp counselors had outwitted and captured two criminals, before they could attack their sister camp, fading from memory of all but the quietest of camp side whispers.

The following year, when young philanthropist Tritanus tried to shut down all three camps around Lake Roccaluce, however, was a very public affair.

28.2 (Awesomedude17)

Flora and Techna count only react with surprise when Scarface burst through the doors and set down a snapping skull.

"Does someone here know how to *finally kill* **DIO? *He hasn't stopped since this morning.*** "

"Hold on, that's DIO?" Flora asked with wide eyes.

Scarface nodded in agreement.

"Bet nobody was expecting this to happen." Techna muttered.

" ***I wasn't expecting this either.*** *He just refuses to die.* "

"I'll have to figure something out." Flora scratched her head. Her former enemy coming in with the still living skull of her most hated enemy wasn't something anyone could predict.

28.3 (Awesomedude17, Jeanne Summers)

"Hand to hand combat?" Diaspro said.

"Yep. Most of us learned some form of it just in case." Stella remarked.

"Even you?"

"Yep, thanks to the Kahn of Outworld, Koa'tal. Aisha was in places like Remnant. Musa learned dance fighting from that short angry guy that one weird Loop. Techna's a Power Ranger. Flora's part vampire. Come to think of it, you're the only Looping fairy I know who hasn't learned anything about punching things."

"You're making my situation sound way worse than it is, I have been a master of several forms of sword combat for a few hundred years now. Or did you miss the part where that was a skill I've had since baseline?"

Stella fixed her with a look. "But can you fight unarmed?"

"I know how to politely kick bad men in the balls and run away," she admitted glumly.

"Princess training?"

"Princess training."

"So, time to add something new to your repertoire. Come on, why the hesitation?"

"I just... hate feeling like..."

"Like a n00b," Diaspro scowled, but deflated from her defensive posture.

"Yes, okay, I hate feeling like a n00b, and besides, I can't think of any kind of... hand to hand that would suit me."

28.4 (lord Martiya)

Darcy was many things. Witch, sadist, manipulator, nicer than you'd expect, lover… And sometimes nostalgic, hence why she had resume her therapist/relationship consultant hobby for that Loop.

"I am a professional. Everything you tell me during this session will remain between us and won't be used against you unless I happen to learn it anyway in different circumstances, and I shall not make attempts to get an excuse to use it against you." she said. "So, what can I do for you, Brandon?"

"That's actually Sky, Brandon and I switched identities for… Reasons." Sky replied. "As for why I'm here… I have a fiancee back on Eraklyon. A political match. I mean, I like her, just not that way, and now I'm falling for Bloom, and… I need to break up with Diaspro without breaking her heart."

"I see." Darcy stated, appreciating the usual Sky far better than the sociopath of that Loop. "Tell me about this Diaspro."

Sky obliged, and in a few minutes Darcy knew the honorary Trix was not Awake… And had a long-term plan to try out on her Unawake people before risking to cause even more damage to the Looping Diaspro and a certain friend of hers that was overdue for Awakening.

"Why don't you invite her out with a few friends… And then leave her with Riven? Just to see if it works."

"You assure me they won't try and kill each other?"

"Trust me, Riven shall be on his best behavior. I know how to convince any boy, without using magic." the witch said as she produced a couple nuts with a smile-and cracked them between her fingers, still with a smile.

28.5 (Awesomedude17)

"What the hell are these?" Stormy bluntly said as she examined the confection before her and her sisters.

"Peeps. They're an Earth type of candy made of marshmallow and covered in sugar." Bloom replied.

"Are they supposed to be in all these colors?"

"Yes."

Icy took a bite, and immediately spat it out, and incinerated it for good measure.

"This is nasty! And people buy this?"

"I honestly don't know why people hate these. They're pretty good." Musa said.

"Musa, baby, do you want me to break up with you?" Darcy said.

"I think it's because they're either too sweet, or the dye is just... wrong." Aisha guessed.

"Trust me when I say that sweetness isn't the only thing wrong with it."

"To be honest, I don't see any reason to care for these. They seem bland." Stella noted.

"Agreed." Brandon nodded.

"They're better stale anyway." Flora shrugged.

"Cheep cheep cheep. Forget this." Icy turned the Peeps into actual chicks. "There. Now they're better."

Flora sighed. "Icy, look over there."

Icy saw five hot pink chicks, conjoined at the thighs.

"Oh. Still better than that rank 'candy' though."

Flora... couldn't actually disagree with that assessment.

28.6 (lord Martiya)

Diaspro Awakened, and barely kept herself from erupting in a stream of blasphemies. She was on Eraklyon, right before a certain official announcement was scheduled to take place, and her relationship with both this Loop's Bloom and the Awake Trix was shaky at best. And Valtor had just made her his little speech.

But she was Diaspro, she had got through worse things than that, and her recent Loop as Diaspro Edelfelt had given her exactly the right skills to deal with him. So she offered Valtor her hand. And he was stupid enough to try and give her a handshake.

Everyone in the courtyard was at least alarmed when the wall of Diaspro's apartment exploded. Especially the Winx and the Trix when they saw Valtor fly out-and barely avoiding a crash-landing as a FURIOUS Diaspro jumped out and landed close to him.

"How you DARE to expect me to betray my homeworld, my prince, and my principles?!" she said, fueling her rage with the knowledge she had actually fallen for it in Baseline. "Not even my most powerful spell is enough to wash this offense with your blood. No, it shall be my two hands, and my two feet, to cleanse this stain!"

"Try it." Valtor replied as he shifted in his demon form.

Diaspro did not "try" anything. She DID inflict him a German Suplex and followed up with a Boston Crab, with the Trix preventing Rachel and two clones (obviously the ones to free the madman this Loop) from interfering-by hitting them with folding chairs.

"Should we interfere?" Sky asked Brandon.

"No, she has it, Valtor sucks at melee."

"I meant to just finish him off, this is too cruel."

Brandon just gave him a LOOK, and Sky had to admit it had been a stupid idea.

Then Bloom decided to join the fray, and hit Valtor with an elbow drop.

28.7 (Jeanne Summers)

Mike and Vanessa were drinking their morning coffee, silently wondering how Bloom was doing at her new magical school, when the front door opened. The pair looked at each other in confusion as it shut, and a blonde teen they'd never seen before in their lives, walked past them with a stack of pizzas, five boxes of tissues and three large bottles of soda.

"Hi, don't mind me, I'm a friend of Bloom's from magic school." The girl disappeared upstairs, Mike and Vanessa sticking their heads

around the corner just in time to see her close the bathroom door behind her. They heard it click as the door locked.

" *Bloom honey...* "

"What's up mum? It's not time for your check in call for another hour."

" *Ummm... you're blonde friend, is sort of...* "

"Stella?"

" *No, the other one, curly hair I think, the one that's locked herself in our bathroom and keeps breaking into random, inconsolable sobbing.* "

" *... oh well, I guess you know why I'm calling now.* "

"...I'm going to make a few calls, see if I can figure out what's going on, I'll... be there in a little bit."

" *Okay honey, bye.* "

"Bye mum."

Flora leaned forward, her own breakfast pushed to the side.

"What's wrong?"

"I think Diaspro may be high in my bathroom. Hang on; Brandon, hi, hey listen, I know it's early, but you're from Eraklyon right?"

" *Yeah, why?* "

"You wouldn't happen to know anything about Princess Diaspro, would you?" Bloom's face grew unexpectedly pale as Prince Sky, still masquerading as his squire Brandon, began waxing poetic about the

princess in question. Ten minutes later he was still extolling her virtues.

It was very clear to Bloom what had sent Diaspro back to crazy town. Flora's confused and concerned expression was still present, so instead of ending the call, Bloom simply handed her the phone and left.

Bloom hugged her parents quickly, and made a beeline for the bathroom, unlocking it with a small jab of magic.

"Why my Earth home bathroom?" She closed and relocked the door behind her, Diaspro shuffled her boxes and bottles around, clearing space for Bloom to join her. The red head took the invitation, slipping into the dry bathtub at the opposite end to the blonde, the pizza, tissues and drinks sitting between them.

"It's the last place he'd think to look for me," Diaspro wiped her eyes. "It's just so stupid though! I was over him, I *am* over him, but then he calls me and he's all like 'I can't wait to see you this weekend, I've missed you so much.'" She has to stop as she starts crying again. Bloom waits out the tears, stealing a slice of pizza to nibble.

"It's just such bullshit," Diaspro says, when she can speak again, "I mean, I knew that there was an infinite variation of possibilities in the loops, but it's not like I actually expected to come across a loop where Sky was actually, finally in love with me. It's not fair, because yes, I could finally have what I always thought I wanted, finally experience true love." She stopped to wipe her face again, "but at the same time, I have made so much progress as a person, so much progress as an independent, single woman. I can't just throw all that away for a few years of something I know I will never, ever have again."

"You know," Bloom licked the pizza sauce from her fingers, "there was a time where you would have, where you would have rubbed this in my face, taken this loop as proof Sky should be with you. To

see you running from that is... it's weird, but I'm so proud of you. I'm also a little guilty because you're refusing happiness with someone who loves you, because he's my boyfriend, the first time we ever met, in the history of Yggdrasil, our positions were reversed, and I didn't do the same."

"Yeah, but you were actually sixteen then, and besides, I've seen the Baseline stuff in hub, you and Sky were 'meant to be.'"

"But Yggdrasil being broken changes things." Diaspro sat up straighter.

"Bloom? Hey, that almost sounded... hey, talk to me, what's going on?"

"... I don't know, I just... loop after loop, and he almost always starts of with the same lie. I keep growing as a person, as a looper, and he... I don't know if he'll ever start looping." Bloom picked up a second slice of pizza with a sigh, "well, while we're in the bathtub, we may as well make the worst of it. Did anyone tell you about the time..."

28.8 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro awakened in a kitchen, in a rustic looking house. She turned, observing the furnishings, her dress and apron, and the cold, some what desolate mountain side outside the window.

'Where the heck?' She felt a Ping go off, she sent one back. A second unidentified Ping followed a few seconds later, as did the clatter of small feet down the stairs.

The boy who emerged couldn't have been older than twelve, he stopped short at the sight of her, blonde hair in gravity defying disarray and bright blue eyes which stared at her, alarmed and confused. Diaspro stood awkwardly, awaiting his judgement.

"Well... you're not my usual mother."

"Moth-" Diaspro's loop memories hit her all at once, one in particular standing out. "OH! Wow... birth is a messy and terrifying procedure."

"So I've heard... and seen, I occasionally grow up to be a doctor. Hi I'm Cloud."

"Diaspro, I'm from the Winx Club Loop, I don't know if you've heard of it."

"Can't say I have, what's it like over there?"

"Fairies, witches, magical battles for the fate of the universe. What's the story here?"

"Alien parasite-virus Hel-bent on destroying the world and riding it around the cosmos like a rocket ship, evil corporation literally sucking the life out of the Planet for fuel, Elite augmented SOLDIERs who tend to end up unstable, and wanting to eradicate large swaths of life... also lots of killable monsters," he shrugged, then added "we're a 'Video Game' in the Hub Loops." as if that explained a few things.

Which it kind of did, Diaspro had notice about twenty Laws of Reality, for which existence changed from universe to universe, that could be predicted with 98% accuracy for any given universe, based on the world's main 'media format' in a hub loop.

"Oh... mine's a cartoon... so are you the Anchor?"

Cloud nodded.

The duo stood there awkwardly for a while.

"So..." Diaspro twisted her apron in her hands, "you mentioned killable monsters?"

"Yeah... did you want to fight some after breakfast?"

"Yes please."

Diaspro sunk her blade into a monster, she had no idea what it was, though she was certain Cloud had told her at some point. They'd been travelling upwards to the mountain's summit, Cloud told her the evil alien parasite-virus was sleeping at the top.

He had a list, he'd said, of things he liked to get out of the way when he woke for an early Loop. Top three were killing Jenova (the evil alien parasite-virus), waking up someone named Vincent (and she should feel free to make as many vampire jokes as she wanted), and burning down an old mansion.

"Damnit!"

"What's wrong?" Diaspro made her way to the (not as young as he looked) boy's side, before them was a vast expanse, a factory of some kind on the far peak.

"Bridge is out," he grumbled.

"Lovix," Diaspro let the transformation wash over her, squashing a tiny smudge of irritation. 'Seriously, you join the 'main cast' and you get all the useful and cool transformations, how is that fair? It's like 'being a Winx' is a prerequisite for levelling up.'

Ignoring Cloud's surprised look, she picked him up and cradled him to her chest as she flew across the gap.

Setting him down on the far side, she huffed.

"What?"

"That is cool, and I want one," he said appraising her form. "So is Lovix like a spell or the form or what?"

"It's the name of this form, we tend to use the name of the transformation as an incantation to focus, but it's really not needed. It's mostly just a 'battle cry' thing."

Nodding his head in understanding, Cloud led the way into the building. There were tubes filled with glowing green liquid – Mako, he'd called it, the literal blood of the planet – with creatures floating inside. At the top of some stairs was a room, the word 'JENOVA' hung on a plaque over the doors.

"Oh that is heinous!" Diaspro exclaimed when she saw the *thing* inside the tube at the end of the room.

"Not for long," Cloud countered, pulling explosives out of his Pocket.

"What are you doing with those?"

"I'm going to blow up Jenova," he gave her a look like it should have been obvious.

"I am your mother young man, and I'm not about to let you play with explosives until you're older," Diaspro propped her hands on her hips and gave her best 'stern mother' face.

"Are... are you serious right now?" Cloud looked more and more confused. Diaspro held her pose a few seconds longer before letting it go with a scoff.

"Nooo, I just wanted to see what Fairy Dust does to an evil alien parasite-virus thingy. Enchantix," her body glowed as her form changed. She plucked the Fairy Dust bottle from her neck and, with a quick flick of her wrist, sheered the top of the container off without disturbing the contents. Cloud watched as an impossible amount of glittery dust poured from the tiny bottle, with the senses given to him thousands of loops before, he felt the flicker and pop of Jenova's alarm before she died.

The part of him that was Cetra – and hadn't that been an annoying loop – heard Gaia breathe a sigh of relief as the 'dust' spread through the Mako, destroying any and all trace of Jenova it found.

"I. Want. One." Cloud told his stand-in-mother.

"Visit our loop as a fairy and make it to Enchantix level," Diaspro flipped her hair over her shoulder with a trace of smugness. "Now, you said something about setting a mansion on fire, and a vampire friend?"

"Yeah, but you realise I have to blow the reactor anyway right, it's syphoning actual, literal 'Spirit of the Planet' Blood, without which the whole world dies."

Diaspro pouted, then grinned, magic flowing from her finger tips.

"I give you: Tecna's eco-friendly power station make over!"

"...Why is it pink?"

It had taken almost a year of whining by phone before Cloud gave into his friend's request to join him at ShinRa. Diaspro, tired of the town's views and pettiness, locked up the house behind them. Using her pre-existing reputation as the town witch, Diaspro told the town that any who tried to break in, would end up cursed in the worst possible manner.

Using her actual fairy powers and her extensive magical knowledge, she place protective spells and a few actual curses on the house just in case.

The pair took the long way around, stopping by several more reactors for Diaspro to change them - "But do they *have* to be *pink* ?" - Diaspro enjoyed the opportunity to practice her photograph on new scenery, new creatures, new faces.

The less said about Diaspro's first attempts at riding a Chocobo, the better.

To Cloud's dismay, Diaspro and Zack adored each other, and co-created Metal Chocobo, a fan club dedicated to Cloud. It wasn't the first time Zack had made Cloud a fan club - "It's good for your self-esteem!" - but it was the first time someone else was as enthusiastic about the club as Zack.

28.9 (Awesomedude17)

"Welcome to City Z, Techna. I'm the Anchor, Saitama, you replaced Genos, and I'm fairly sure that this Loop is gonna be real boring. How do you feel about this place so far?"

"Honestly, apart from the monsters that regularly attack the city, it's not that bad. I suppose some of the 'heroes' I'll likely meet are only heroes in the widest terms."

"What makes you think that?"

"I had a few trips to Marvel and DC. I know that heroes and villains are on a spectrum. Heck, one of the villains Bloom had to face actually started Looping recently, and is getting over a few facts that she doesn't want."

"So she's alright?"

"I suppose, but I'm still worried."

"I'll be honest, I don't know if I can help you with her, or something like that, but I guess I could just take you on as my disciple and we can destroy some monsters so you can think on it. Now, how about we get to the hero registry and get this over with."

"Sure. Let's become legitimate heroes."

Saitama successfully hid the fact that he couldn't remember the questions for the written exam if his life depended on it. He never had a chance to figure that out anyhow.

So this came out quick. Special thanks to Jeanne for putting in so much work for this chapter. Also, I believe this is the first chapter where I didn't write any of the snips! I must now hide in shame. Or write more snips. Either/or.

28.1: Is anyone else getting a "Home Alone" vibe off this? It feels like one of the Home Alone movies.

28.2: Awkward...

28.3: We all start out that way, Diaspro.

28.4: This strikes me as a bad idea...

28.5: Um... Happy Easter? Oh, and ladies? Next time, grab some toothpicks and try Peep Jousting.

28.6: ...wrestling's fake. *ducks for cover*

28.7: Yggdrasil is a cruel mistress.

28.8: Congratulations on acquiring the Main Character ability of Increasing Power, Diaspro!

28.9: ...I really don't have anything to say about this one, actually.

Onwards to the next chapter!

Chapter 29

29.1 (Awesomedude17)

CLANG

FWOOSH

GULP

The two Looper set their glasses of milk down as they relaxed after a long day of training/seeing how mundane their skills could get before one of them inevitably tried something over the top.

"Well I'll be damned. You're one of the few who dared to attack a cucco even after it's been known what happens when you hurt a cucco, and got away with it." Link smirked with a chuckle.

"To be fair, those chuchus were doing similar things to them, so I just gave them encouragement." Diaspro replied.

"Still, it seems that your skill with the bow and arrow is great... for a Non-Looper."

"I much prefer swords, thank you. I've actually been collecting some, and Techna always remarked how impressive my collection was whenever she saw it."

"So, what would you say is your favorite?"

"That would be like asking me what my favorite gem is. I could choose one, but it's very difficult to say. I have multiple favorites, and they all do different things. For example-" Diaspro took out an unusually shaped sword. "This is a colichemarde. as you can see, the base is much thicker than the rest of the blade. It's mainly used

to deflect sabres." She took out a katana. "No explanation needed here." She took out a claymore. "Too big for my tastes, but I'd say that it has it uses. Point is, there's so many to choose from that you cannot just choose one."

"That makes sense. It's just like how I grab various doodads throughout my journeys and I simply can't choose one that I definitely say is my favorite. I can see how..."

"...Link?"

"Shhh, quiet down."

"What's going on?" Diaspro asked with confusion.

"It's Ganondorf, and while he's Awake, he has lost something he really liked and has been taking it out on me. I do not-"

"Link."

Link sighed and turned to the King of Gerudos. "Ganondorf."

"Where is my sword?"

"Remind me what it looks like again?"

"I've commissioned a gold sword for decoration a few weeks ago and it was lost during delivery, and knowing you, you must have found it at some point."

"And I keep telling you, I've never seen a gold sword this Loop."

"Wait. Is it this?" Diaspro took out a gold sword from her Pocket.

"Exactly. Where'd you find this?"

"Some Gerudos were stealing it, but it lacked a delivery address, so I just assumed that it was theirs."

"...Well, I suppose I've got some things to say to them at least, and Link, I apologize for my behavior. Now then, I'll take my leave." Ganondorf took his sword and left.

"Link, I'm sorry that-"

"Diaspro, rule number one of living in my Loop is that nine times out of ten, you're fine with regards to kleptomania."

"That doesn't sound healthy."

"Tell that to half the people from the video game Branches."

29.2 (Jeanne Summers)

Timmy tightened the last screw of the panel and sat back with a sigh. According to his mental list, that should have been the last of the repairs for the ship's engines. Now he just had to finish fixing... everything else.

The sound of footsteps over the metal floor reached his ears, he turned to the door in time to see Brandon stick his head in, followed by the rest of his body when he spotted Timmy.

"Hey man, I brought those things you wanted," Brandon lifted the box in his arms an inch.

"Thanks Brandon, can you carry them to the... actually you'd better just follow me," Timmy grimaced as he stood, stretching his muscles. He'd spent far too long hunched over in awkward positions the past two days.

Brandon stepped back to allow Timmy through the door, then followed him down the corridor.

"So how are the repairs coming along, anyway?"

"Well, I've finished the engine, so we can get power to the systems now, see how bad they actually are, but even if not everything needs a fix then... maybe another week."

Brandon snorted, "by the time you've got this ship flying, we probably won't need the ship any more."

"If that's the case, I'm putting it in my Pocket and keeping it," Timmy chuckled, waving Brandon towards a bench where he could put down the box.

"You can try, but Diaspro did buy it, so you'd probably have to fight her for it."

"Has she even got the room in her Pocket for it?"

"Maybe if she moved everything out of her Pocket and into the ship, then put the ship in? It's not the biggest ship out there."

"Right, which brings up another question," Timmy paused to fiddle with a control panel, "what good is this ship? I mean, she said it was for transporting goods, but there's merchant vessels and actual trade ships for that, ones that could carry a more significant sized cargo."

Brandon shrugged, "I think she's more concerned about the medical supplies that aren't getting through to the Colonies in the Ifrit Belt right now. She probably knows that this ship won't be any help, but with the interference stopping teleportation in the sector, this is the only thing she can do to feel like she's helping." At Timmy's look he added, "even if you are doing most of the manual labour."

"Maybe I should take our next loop together to teach her how to maintain a ship, it's important to know, and if this scenario ever happens again, she can help with the repairs."

"Speaking of helping you repair the ship, anything I can do to help, while I'm here?"

"Ambassador, I do understand that, but if you'd-"

"I really don't think you do princess Diaspro, because if you did, you'd understand why we can't give your colonies aid dealing with their... pirate problem." The man sneered at her and walked away. Diaspro sneered at his back, squeezing her hands as she imagined wringing his neck.

She was getting really, really annoyed with absolutely everybody in politics.

The Colonies of the Ifrit Belt weren't even her colonies, nor the colonies of Eraklyon, they were founded by a group of people form dozens of different worlds, founded for the purpose of mining the rare and hard to obtain ore and mineral resources of the Belt.

While they'd been bringing out saleable goods in large enough quantities, planets from all over the magical dimension had been happy to lend aid and perform supply runs to the mines. But now that the sector had been under constant harassment from pirates for several months, they hadn't been able to deliver any merchandise in too long for the other worlds, and despite two dozen worlds with in range when the Colonies sent out a distress signal reporting a plague and low medical supplies, no one was lifting a finger to help.

She knew why, all of the worlds were waiting for the Colonists to die out, before the planets would send their own forces, in a race to occupy and claim pre-existing infrastructures, to claim the Belt's bounty for their own planet, rather than being forced to share what the Colonists sold to everyone with the coin to pay.

A long time ago she would have agreed, she would have waited for the Colonies to die out, aided in Eraklyon's take over, possibly fighting other militarised Guardian Fairies for the claim.

Teleporting to the shipyard where her derelict ship sat, bought with her own private funds, Diaspro wished it wasn't just her and Flora and the two boys awake. As a group, the Winx Club had immense

political pull, they might have been able to convince someone to send ships to help.

"So, yeah." Timmy nudged his glasses back up as he waited for Diaspro's response, she frowned, clearly weighing her options. Timmy hesitated, then added, "personally, I'd wait another ten hours, I can do a few more patch jobs that will hold long enough while we're flying for me to finish on route."

Diaspro nodded in agreement, and looked at Brandon, who spoke before she had the chance.

"If you reckon you can fly her, I can help Timmy with the repairs."

"Thank you, both of you. I'll have the medical supplies ready to go in ten hours."

"Are you going to call in Flora?" Timmy asked, curious, but Diaspro shook her head.

"I'll call her, but only to let her know where we're going, the Belt is full of minerals that block magic, all kinds of it. If something goes wrong... well having someone who knows where we've gone might be helpful. I know it's mean, but I don't really trust anyone else to not let it slip, and there are factions who would stop us."

"The governments of the worlds really want these Colonies that badly?"

"The Belt has some of the richest deposits of rare minerals and ores in the entire universe, including Estrantonium."

"Isn't that the stuff that... from the... the..." Brandon looked like he was about to be sick.

"What? What's Estrantonium? I've never heard of it," Timmy looked between the pair, confused.

"That's because, as far as I'm aware, it only exist in this variation of the timeline. There's an ancient artefact, Eraklyon has it now, but it's out of power. It's said that long, *long* ago, before fairies became the Guardians of worlds, that this artefact destroyed twenty-nine planets. Estrantonium, is the radioactive substance which powers it. If someone had a supply of it, it would be a small matter to steal the artefact."

"But, if the Colonists have been mining the Belt..."

"The Belt was only colonised thirty-four years ago, but the first thing in their charter, is the promise to never mine or sell Estrantonium to any planet. Ever. But an invading force, who came in after everyone died off, well, they wouldn't be bound but that charter, by oath, honour or magic."

"The way you're talking, it's starting to sound like this plague, and this sudden onset pirate problem, is part of a conspiracy." Brandon huffed, leaning against a wall.

"The pirates aren't 'sudden onset,'" Diaspro argued, "but they did experience a sudden upswing in activity, and from the rumours, an influx of better weaponry."

Timmy let out a disgusted noise, and grabbed his tool kit, "I'd better get started on the shields and cloaking, if the life support fails we've got suits, and navigation should be fine, as long as we keep heading in the right direction."

"Thank you Timmy, I really appreciate this. I know we don't get to hang out very often, but you've really helped me out a lot here, even though you didn't have to."

"Of course I did, I'm a Specialist, we're heroes in training, and no offence princess, but you are clearly a damsel in distress." Diaspro gave him a bemused look, and bid the boys good luck in their repairs, while she headed out to prepare the supplies for transport.

'Damnit, damnit, DAMNIT!' Timmy cursed to himself as he crawled along the engineering access tubes. 'I should have finished the sensors *before* I started on the life support. Flora gave us those pot plants and everything, Life Support was not a priority problem, why didn't I just leave it?'

Now the ship was floating on the edge of The Ifrit Belt, and swarming with space pirates. He'd taken to the tubes to get a better handle on the situation, he counted twelve insurgents remaining, Brandon was down for the count, after taking out three, Diaspro had managed to take four, before they'd hit her with a paralytic. Combined with the Belt's anti-magic effects, that took her out of the running until the paralytic wore off. Timmy planned to have their ship back before then.

First he had to get to the main power circuits on the next deck up.

Habalone had been a pirate for all his life, his mother had been a pirate, her father had been a pirate, hells, his baby sister was going to be a pirate, once she'd stopped all that silly witch business. He'd taken big ships and small, stolen food and fuel, medicines as people. If it could be stolen, he and his crew had taken it at some point.

This newest ship though, the one with the medicine and only two crew - one of them a real pretty lady who'd fetch a good price on market, and a fit young man who might fetch an even better one – the ship showed signs of recent repairs, and the cargo wasn't cheap, but when the ship had first shown up on sensors, it had looked like it had come from a junk yard.

It kept playing up too, systems shutting down and starting up when they shouldn't have, metal grating suddenly electrifying. The crew was dropping one by one. Habalone was in charge of this particular raid, so he was the one who had to call for the retreat.

But Hells if he was going to lose a ship to a ghost.

The ships intercom crackled to life, buzzing with static. Habalone looked around, afraid. He'd been wrong, so wrong. This haunted ship was far more dangerous than he thought.

'I have a present for you,' a voice came through the static, 'why don't you come down to the cargo bay.' The intercom shut off with a squeal.

"All crew members, abandon the ship, I repeat, all crew, we're leaving. NOW!"

Timmy kept his face blank as he stacked the crew members of the pirate ship, these were not the fun movie pirates who went about causing chaos for corrupt governments. These were cold blooded murderers, he'd over heard them talking about selling Diaspro and Brandon in slave markets. And worse.

Long, long, long ago, in baseline, Tecna had called him a coward for choosing not to fight.

She'd been wrong. Timmy simply knew how to pick his battles.

He also knew when to go over *that* line, the imaginary one that people wrongly believed separated Heroes from the rest of the law enforcing and military forces.

Double checking the invaders were all there – Brandon's three, Diaspro's four, his eleven – he picked up the radio, and turned on the intercom.

"I have a present for you."

Watching from the access tube high above, the one no one would notice if they hadn't known it was there, Timmy watched the leader of the pirates take in his crew. Then he flicked a switch and locked all the exits.

He turned the intercom back on. "Tell me pirate, who do you work for, who sent you after this ship?" below, the pirate looked confused.

"No one, I'm the captain, I don't answer to no one."

"The weapons you and your men carried, where did you get them?"

"We stole them, we're pirates, it's what we do!"

"I know what you do, pirate. Where did the weapons come from, don't lie to me again."

"I ain't lying, we stole 'em. A transport vessel several months back, piss poor armour, almost no weapons of it's own, just passing through, but had crates of good tech and weapons."

"Where was it from?"

"Why do you care, ghost? Why should I tell you?"

"Oh, you don't need to, I just didn't want to waste time when you could have just told me."

Timmy began the process of opening the cargo bay's outer doors.

"-and there will be a ship waiting, are you sure you want to go back in snookums?"

"I'm sure Stella, we still need to deliver the medicines to the Colonies, but thanks for having our backs on this one."

"Of course, you stay safe, no more being captured by pirates!"

"You got it," Brandon smiled at his girlfriend, and closed the link. He turned to Timmy and Diaspro, who was still having trouble moving her hands right.

"You two heard that?"

"Yeah, it was really nice of Stella to send Royal Military to intercept the Pirate ship for us," Diaspro's speech was a little slurred as her mouth refused to cooperate completely. "How are you doing Timmy, what you had to do couldn't have been easy."

"No, it wasn't. But it had to be done, this pirate plague has to be stopped, and so does the kingdom arming them."

Brandon put a comforting hand on his friend's shoulder, and the trio sat in silence for a moment longer.

Until Diaspro slipped off the bench with a squeak, her muscles responding like jelly as she tried and failed to stay upright.

29.3 (Awesomedude17)

Diaspro Awoke, found herself bound up, and in a cage with Bloom.

"You Awake?"

"Mmm Mmmmmm."

"Yeah, blame the Trix for this. Namely, Darcy. Also, Deadpool got involved, mostly to watch this unfold."

Diaspro groaned as she unbound herself with ease. Removing her gag, she looked around to see that things were... romantic.

"Okay, rose petals around us, a table with a lit candle, *Careless Whisper* playing in the background. What are those witches thinking?"

"They're thinking the same logic that got Flora and Techna together, when Musa put them in a cage."

"UGH! Alright, enough of this." Diaspro took out a Buster Sword, cut through the bars with ease, and hopped out. "Bloom, let's give those witches some reasons why we'll never become a thing."

"With pleasure." Bloom said as fire engulfed her hands.

The two enemies-turned-friends burst through the door to find three shocked witches and Deadpool who had a bucket of popcorn.

"Told you they'd break out. I knew that when you brought out Wham!, you were trying too hard. Enjoy the shitstorm directed at you. I'll be here, barely giving a crap." Deadpool began to munch on some popcorn.

Bloom, ignoring the latex-wearing lunatic who probably only came to watch the plan unravel, approached the Trix.

"Alright girls, let me make one thing clear for all of you. I am not interested in Diaspro in that way, and I'm sure she's not interested in me either."

"I've been attracted to Prince Sky for so long that when I learned that he never loved me, everything went to Hell for me, so I've decided that I'm not going to get into any romantic relationship until I feel comfortable about it, and I'm not. Besides, I know that Loopers tend to more loose about their sexuality, but I can only see myself as straight as an arrow."

"And to add onto that, I've been waiting for Sky to Activate for a long time, and while he is a bit of an idiot for not taking care of his engagement with Diaspro here, he's still a nice guy, and my boyfriend, and nothing you'll do can change that, so how about you take your ship crazy moods, and shove them where the sun don't shine?"

The Trix were speechless.

"Man am I hoping that when this get put up on the TV Tropes page under Ship Sinking, it'll be hilarious."

"Okay, he's annoying me. Who is that, and why is he here?" Diaspro demanded.

"I'm the comic relief here, and also here to remind the readers of things that exist, like Facepalmistry's shot at the Misc. Loops thing that's been done for the third time, or that we need Tropes added to the newly created tropes page for this very compilation."

"...what" Diaspro said.

"He's Deadpool, he does this all the time."

"I... excuse me, I'm going to shout obscenities in the other room now."

"Be my guest after we make those witches pay." Bloom ignited herself on fire, causing the Trix to panic and retreat into their Subspace Pockets.

"Okay, I'm leaving now." Diaspro left.

"So... I heard season 6 sucked, Bloom. You want to talk about it?"

"I'm going to ignore you now." Bloom left the room.

"Pff... whatever. I've got popcorn, drenched in buttah!" Deadpool popped some popcorn into his mouth. "Soooo buttery."

29.4 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro teleported into Alfea and stopped stock still, the entire school was in fairy form and facing off against... a small boy? Flora was saying something as she hurtled spells at the child. Diaspro wasn't sure but she thought she caught the word 'Billy.' Eyes going wide she teleported over to the Anchor.

"Flora, what's going on? Is that Billy the MLE?"

"Yeah, start casting," Flora switched to her vampiric form and dove in for close combat. Diaspro flailed, she'd thought there was a patch to prevent Billy from looping in.

'Spells, okay, spells... isn't this kid some kind of indestructable!? He'd probably walk off the Life Stream loop version of Mete...or?' A dangerous plan blossomed in her mind. Shrugging she muttered "nothing much to loose," and flew down to the MLE.

"Hey Billy! Do you want to play with me? I Have a great game for you to try!"

The boy's head snapped around to her, Flora looked at her in horror, shaking her head.

"What game?"

"It's called 'Catch the Comet,'" Billy wrinkled his nose.

"Sounds dumb."

"Oh, well if you don't want to play... its probably just as well, you aren't really big enough anyway."

"I'm big enough, I wanna play, let me PLAY!"

"Alright, take my hand and we'll play," Diaspro held out her hand, the boy rushing over to grab it.

"How do we play?"

"Like this:" Diaspro shifted her grip on his hand and spun, teleporting as she went, "Catch. The. Comet!" Spinning rapidly like a top as she emerged in deep space, Diaspro released Billy, letting him sail out of her hastily constructed bubble of spells and into the void, directly into the path of an oncoming comet, travelling at implausible speeds towards a nearby black hole.

She let out a deep breath, giving the vanishing comet a cheeky salute as it carried the MLE to his doom. She wondered if she'd have time to get back or if the Black Hole's time dilation effect would-

---

Diaspro shrieked and swerved, pulling off to the side of the road. Panting she took stock, she was in a car, on a foggy road in... somewhere in America.

Why?

Fragments of memory came back to her, a childhood car crash, a family last in trauma, an ongoing search to reunite with them... and a clue, a ghost story, urban legend, fool's errand of a chance.

Turning off the engine, she opened her door, a glimmering light drawing her attention to an old book in the pocket.

Having met both Sly Cooper and Nancy Drew in the Loopers' Bar once, Diaspro knew the light wasn't some form of eye problem, and vowed to never make fun of the duo for their 'glitter vision' again.

With a sigh, Diaspro pulled the book free.

'Dark Dimensions'

'Sounds fun,' she opened the cover, the first page introduced her to the concept of the Dark Dimensions, places where terrible things had happened, and the negative energies had pulled whole towns into pocket dimensions of misery.

"Huh, it's like a G-rated Silent Hill... I really hope there's no Pyramid Head." Diaspro swore to herself as the page came loose, then huffed as she realised the rest of the book was illegible, and crumbling. Leaning back into her car she found a satchel and an empty journal, which she slipped the page into for safe keeping. A quick scrounge in the glove box turned up pens, several paper clips, sticky tape and a

few protein bars, her water bottle was retrieved from the centre console.

Unsure what she'd need for the journey, she elected to take everything. The satchel still had plenty of room.

"What is this, a bag of holding?" it hadn't gotten much heavier, even with the full bottle of water, "this reality must be a game in the Hub." They were rife with weight defying bags.

Shutting the door with a thump, she eyed the foggy road ahead, a large gate in sight, and a (clearly wrong) 'dead end' sign, laying in the leaves on the other side of the road.

"Okay world, let's see what you've got."

Admin Space

Miele smiled as the confirmation email came through, Diaspro had been successfully implanted into the Dark Dimensions' trial run, no damage to her data; a note that there was possibility of an ability permanently grafting itself to her code, and the recovery of missing character data seemed to be working at last.

She just hoped it was enough, Maeve had seemed really upset that, despite 95% restoration of the world's data, the character data was resisting all efforts to retrieve or repair it. She also hoped Fand wouldn't bee too upset when she got back in the morning, but Miele had checked with Keech first, and the head of The Department for M.o.M. And D.A.D. Had said it would be fine.

In the Dark Dimensions Loop (trial run)

Face pulled into a scowl as she copied a picture of the town map into her journal, Diaspro tried not to curse. She'd finally realised, when she'd tried to conjure a light (then, when failing, attempted to pull a torch from her Pocket only to fail that as well,) that she was in a Safe-Mode Loop.

No Magic, No Pocket.

This was going to take a while.

29.5 (Jeanne Summers)

As per usual, Diaspro flung her arm out to catch the bannister as she missed the step on the palace staircase.

Not as per usual, she missed, slammed her hand into the railing, landed and slid down four steps with a thwump.

'What the fu-'

"Prince Jasper! Are you alright?"

Diaspro – no, Jasper – sat in shock, cataloguing the differences in her – *his* – body.

'Ah, that's what the fu-'

"Prince Jasper, do you... need some help?"

Diaspro/Jasper determined her/his ability to deal with the gender change, straightened her/his shoulders, and fixed the guards with an upset look.

"I... I can't do this any more!" she/he wailed, crocodile tears welling up, "I've tried, I have, but I just can't help it, it's who I am, and I refuse to pretend any more. No more of this Jasper nonsense, you will call me Diaspro. It's time for me to become who I was always meant to be!"

With her melodramatic declaration out of the way, Diaspro cast the spell she had been preparing for hundreds of loops, since she'd first found out about the occasional gender swapping.

Jasper's body shrank and morphed, becoming Diaspro's more familiar figure. With a snap of her fingers. The wizard prince's clothing became the more familiar fairy princess's dress. Wiping her tears from her face, she glared a challenge at the guards.

"Anybody have a problem with that?"

For a moment she thought the guards would cause a fuss, then one of them nudged another and they all agreed "no princess Diaspro, no problem."

Bloom (as Blake) looked at her with betrayed eyes.

"Why didn't Diaspro change?"

"Oh I did, but unlike you, I know how to perform a high level Y to X transmorgification enchantment."

Bloom crossed the room before Diaspro could blink.

"Teach me your ways!"

Flora made an agreeing hum, "these kinds of loops are pretty hard on Bloom, it might help if she knew she could change back at will."

"Although," Tecna asked, frowning, "how are you getting away with just suddenly being female in this loop?"

"Oh I made a scene, came out of the gender identity closet as female and transformed. It probably helps that Jasper was a wizard, they're expected to be a bit odd... honestly by the time they realise I'm not changing back, they'll be used to me being female and won't

care any more." She shrugged and began teaching Bloom the hard to find gender swapping spell.

Stella almost punched Bloom when she found out. "WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME IMMEADIATELY!?"

"I'M SORRY!"

"Whatever, just TEACH ME! Ahem, sorry, I'm fine. But seriously teach me right now."

29.6 (lord Martiya)

"What do you want?" Icy bluntly asked Cornelia when she showed up.

"I have an offer for a truce." the visiting Looper said. "I guess you know what I've been doing?"

"You mean completely sealing Tritannus' cell, collapsing Darkar's lair on his head, robbing that warlord Yoshinoya blind, and stealing our fun with Mitzi?" Stormy asked, a bit bitter since she had realized WHO had ruined Mitzi before they could.

"I have a younger sister. But I take you know I'm tackling all the bullies of this Branch-and I believe you'll be interested in helping with my next target: Lightrock. After all, you haven't found anything bad enough for them yet..."

"And what would a little HERO like you know about making them pay?"

Cornelia simply smiled and gave the Trix some papers. She remained like that as the Trix read them, then incredulously re-read them multiple times until they accepted that Cornelia had done just that.

"And you call yourself a hero?!" Darcy asked, trying, and failing, to hide her admiration for what Cornelia had pulled.

"A very efficient one." Cornelia confirmed.

"Then how did YOU come up with this when WE couldn't?!" Icy demanded.

"Perspective: you are relatively hands-on people who never had many resources besides your own magic, while I am the daughter of a bank director. That's why I robbed Yoshinoya to begin with." she explained as she offered Icy her hand. "So... Truce for this Loop?"

Icy didn't answer, just shook her hand.

The throne room of Lightrock was in complete silence, except for Stormy snickering, as the Lord of the Knights and his closest assistants digested what Cornelia and the Trix had just announced them.

"What the-Could you please repeat that?" the lord said after a few minutes of shock.

"I said I've bought Lightrock out and you're fired. You and most of your torturers, but some I may keep if you haven't corrupted them enough." Cornelia replied as she showed him a copy of the relevant documents. "Now get out before I have you arrested for trespassing."

In the following months as "patients" in the new and reformed Lightrock, the Lord of the Knights and his closest assistants would regret having attacked the Loopers to try and keep the Fortress.

29.7 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro Woke up in a nice bed, opening her eyes to look around, she saw... nothing.

She closed and opened her eyes a few times, but still nothing.

"Wow it must be dark in here," carefully she conjured a night-light to her hand, a small ball of light which would get gradually brighter, so she didn't blind herself.

She waited, magic tingling in her palm, but the light didn't light. Dispelling it, she tried again, and again. Reaching out she ran her free hand over the hand which held the spell.

The spell was definitely there, she just couldn't see it.

She couldn't see.

Before the panic could set in, her loop memories hit her with all the force of a great typhoon. Sorting through them Diaspro calmed down, letting her new earthbending skills read the room as she sent and received vibrations.

It wasn't too different from the ground penetrating radar ability she used to find crystal veins in the ground, it was just... way more tuned.

"High definition," Diaspro giggled aloud.

Diaspro found she enjoyed earthbending, the way the earth responded to her, even the none jewel parts she'd always struggled with, the way she got to use her body rather than just casting with a flick of her wrist.

The way she could see *everything* .

Now if only the Beifong parents were understanding about her love of Earth Rumble...

29.8 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro Awakens.

Her first impulse – to fling out her hand to catch the railing – sends her tumbling out of bed and onto the floor. A very unfamiliar floor.

"What's wrong with you?" The voice is familiar, Diaspro turns and takes in the scene.

She's just fallen put of the fourth bed in a Cloud Tower dormitory, the Trix looking at her bleary eyed, having been woken by her fall. Or more likely, from her head smacking the bedside table loudly as she fell.

"Strange dream, just feeling kind of loopy," she Pings. Three Pings respond, none of the Trix indicate they felt a thing. Icy scoffs and throws off her blanket.

"Well, we're all awake now, we may as well get some work done before school starts."

The memories hit her suddenly, all at once, she reels for a moment. Then Diaspro, or rather: Goldy, witch of metal, fourth sister of the infamous Trix, whimpers.

Her witch form outfit is of an identical cut to her basic fairy form, but it was made of a pale yellow gold latex like material, her stone accessories swapped for metal ones, and a large G completed her outfit.

'It could have been worse,' she muses to herself as the witch quartet prepare to attack the Winx Club, 'I could have looked like a cheap, season one Stella knock off.'

" *Goldy?* " Flora gasps as she hears Diaspro's new in loop name, " *really?"*

"Yes, really, and honestly I'm choosing to look at the positives here: at least it wasn't 'Rusty' or worse: 'Irony.'" Diaspro see the exact instant Flora gets it, it's half a millisecond before she breaks down, howling with laughter.

Losing is both a foreign and familiar feeling, she'd lost a lot in her early days, been losing a lot since Waking in this loop, but for a long time now, she'd been on the winning side. Oh sure, she could switch sides, but she was kind of curious how being a Trix would play out.

Diaspro had never known a lot about Lightrock prison, she knew the Trix spoke of it with extreme hatred, it made the fairies shudder, but she'd never really thought about what it was like there.

As the guards shoved the Trix quartet toward the portal, Flora had to be held back.

"Diaspro, I'm sorry! I tried, but they won't let this go, I'M SORRY! Stay strong Diaspro, STAY STRONG!"

"Who the hell is Diaspro?"

When Darkar breaks them out, she grins menacingly, using the power of the Gloomix wrapped around her hips to summon various metals in the form of powder to her hands, scattering it about the entire complex.

Surely she can be forgiven for this, she'll suffer the Twilight Loop again if she has to, but this place had to burn.

The thermite fire burnt for hours.

Diaspro popped a prawn into her mouth, savouring the delicate flavours. Truly: no world did sea food like Andros.

"So what's it like, being a witch?" Aisha asked over her squid tube.

"So bizarre, I'm really trying to have fun with it though, but some of the stuff we're doing is just so: urgh."

"Are the powers that different though, the whole 'flying with *out* wings' and stuff?"

"Kinda of? I mean, the method for flying is different, but it still feels pretty similar, you know. A lot of the spells require dark energy, so I'm channeling any unresolved issues I have left over, which is a surprising amount. Honestly comparison might have been easier if I was the witch of Stone rather than Metal."

"Yeah, Goldy-locks, what's that about?" Musa finally looked up from drowning her fish is soy sauce.

"Oh," Aisha perked up, "you said you replaced Toph recently, right?"

"Oh hey yeah, she's a metal bender isn't she?" Musa asked.

Diaspro said nothing, her 'oh duh, way to be an idiot me,' expression said it for her. "Oh my god, we should make our own pro-bending team."

"We'd still need a fire bender for that," Aisha cut Diaspro off before she could get too excited. For a few seconds Diaspro looked confused, then her expression cleared and she smacked herself in the forehead lightly.

"Right, yeah, duh, of course. But like, after one of us gets to be a firebender..."

"Right... that might actually be fun, what would we call ourselves though?"

When they lost this time, the Trix quartet were able to get away.

For a short time.

Diaspro shivered in the cold of Omega, as much as she hated it, it as still preferable to Lightrock.

Valtor left with a swirl of his coat, the door thumping closed behind him.

"You do know what he's doing, don't you sisters?" The original Trix looked over at her, a low key animosity hanging over them. "Together, the four of us are incredibly powerful, Icy freed *him* , and *he* ? Needs *us* , he just doesn't need us powerful enough to challenge him. He keeps showing one of us favour, ignoring the rest, and who he favours keeps changing."

Diaspro's words sunk in.

"He's playing us," Stormy seethed. Darcy scowled, and Icy eyed Diaspro with a considering look.

"Well then, little sister, what do you suggest we do about it?"

"We do what witches do, after all: backstabbing is as backstabbing does, one good knifing deserves another, yes?"

The Trix cackled, and begun to plan their revolt.

If asked later, Diaspro would deny allowing the team up with Tritanus was for petty movie referencing reasons.

Roxy floated beside the Winx, Artu barking in the background as the Trix prepared to retreat. Fixing her gaze solely on the Earth fairy,

Diaspro amazed herself by keeping a straight face as she yelled back to the girl.

"I'll get you young fairy, and your little dog too!"

The sound of Flora's face palm travelled really well over the water.

29.9 (Firehawk242, Masterweaver)

Bloom hummed cheerfully as she started settling into the dorm room she would be sharing with Musa for the next three years. The door still said Flora was the other inhabitant of the room, but it was an all-hands loop. The living conditions would be rearranged soon enough. It'd been a while since everyone was Awake at the same time. Hopefully it would be a good loop.

Her phone buzzed, informing her of an incoming call. Who would be calling her this early? She picked it up and answered. "Bloom speaking."

"Hey, Bloom, it's Sk- Uh, Brandon. Can we talk?" Sky's voice came through the receiver.

"Sure," Bloom said. "What's up?"

"Uh, I mean... can we talk in person?" Sky asked.

"Alright. Stop by my dorm, I'm still getting myself organized in here."

"Uh, yeah, I'll be right over." He hung up.

So that was what this was about. The rare loops where Sky was honest enough to tell her about Diaspro this soon were probably some of her favorites. She didn't always end up dating honest Sky, but she certainly respected him more than most of the versions of him. This loop just kept getting better!

Sky walked in the door to find Bloom hanging up the last of her clothes. "Oh hey Brandon," she said, closing the closet. "What did you want to talk about?"

"Um. First, my name's Sky, not Brandon. Sorry about that. Second, um, do you remember doing some of-" That was as far as he got before Bloom grabbed him by the arm, flipped him, and hurled him against the wall. Water coalesced from the air and she blasted Sky back, pinning him to the wall and freezing him in place.

"Bloom? Bloom!" Sky shouted as she quickly advanced, both her eyes and her hand aflame, her fist drawing back for a punch.

Flora and Musa paused on their way back from requesting the room transfer as a gout of flame ripped through the wall of Bloom's and now Musa's room and blew out into the quad.

"Should we check on that?" Musa asked.

"I vote for no," Flora said.

"Probably a good idea," Musa said.

Sky glanced at the sizzling hole next to his head. "Bloom?" he all but whimpered.

"Tell me, *Sky* ," Bloom said, righteous anger dripping from every word. "Tell me. How much do you remember? Seven years? Fourteen? Twenty one? More?"

"Seven! Seven!" Sky said. "Just seven!"

Bloom stared at him, her eyes still burning. She took a deep breath, then let it out. "Stay right there." She pulled out her phone and started dialing.

"O-okay," Sky said.

Diaspro was finalizing her paperwork for late entry to Alfea when her phone rang. She answered it quickly, still looking over the paperwork. "Diaspro speaking."

"Diaspro, it's Bloom. I need you at Alfea right now."

"Bloom? What's up? I take it you're looping?"

"Yes, and I really don't want to explain this over the phone. Please, I need you here right now."

"Should I bother packing?"

"No, I need you here *now* ."

"Got it," Diaspro said. "Be there in ten seconds." She hung up, then backed away from her desk. "Believix, Zoomix!"

If Sky thought his day couldn't get worse after he'd been nearly flash-fried, he was quickly proven wrong when Diaspro appeared in a flash of light.

"So, what are you doing with him frozen to your wall?" Diaspro said, ignoring him.

"He's looping," Bloom said.

"Oh," Diaspro said.

"I figured you'd want to know."

"Thanks, I think."

Bloom rounded on Sky. "You have no idea how angry I am right about now. You remember one loop. How many do you think I

remember? How many do you think Diaspro remembers?"

"Um... ten?" Sky said weakly.

The two fairies broke out laughing. It wasn't a pleasant sound.

"Try ten million," Bloom said. "You'll still be low. Diaspro's younger than me, a lot younger, but she still remembers several thousand. Millions of repeats of this. Millions of times you lied to me. Millions of times I loved you despite that."

"I'm-"

"Save it," Bloom said. "I don't want your words. You snared me the first time because you were a knight in shining armor, stepping straight out of a fairy tale to save the day. That won't work this time. I don't want a fairy tale. Not anymore. I want someone I can trust. Someone I like. Someone who actually deserves me loving him. And right now Sky? *You're not good enough.* "

With that Bloom turned on her heel and marched out of the room, slamming the door behind her. The ice imprisoning Sky melted and he fell to the floor.

"You deserved that, you know," Diaspro said.

Sky just stared at her mutely, still in shock.

"We're going to have a quick chat, you and I," Diaspro said. "And then you're going to go back to Red Fountain. Ask Timmy and Brandon about the loops. They'll explain what's going on and show you the ropes."

"Okay," Sky acquiesced.

"Now, our chat," Diaspro said, sitting down on Bloom's bed like a queen on a throne. "I'm mostly over you. I know we're not going to happen, so you don't need to worry about that. Bloom, angry as she is, still loves you, at least a little. You are going to earn that love. You

are going to make yourself the man she deserves, or you will answer to me. Got it?"

"Got it."

"Good," Diaspro said. She reached into her Pocket and pulled out a small metal band. "Do you recognize this? It's the engagement ring your family presented me with when our marriage was arranged. I don't know why, but I decided to keep a copy. Probably bad for me, but I did it anyways. I'm giving this to you."

She threw the ring at Sky, bouncing it off his chest. He carefully picked the ring up off the ground. "What should I do with it?" he asked, dazed.

"Keep it," Diaspro said. "When Timmy and Brandon explain how to make a Pocket to you, I want you to put it in there. And then, when you've redeemed yourself, I want to see it on Bloom's finger. When I see her wearing that ring, and wearing it as it was intended to be worn, THEN I'll forgive you. Not before. Got it?"

"Got it," Sky said.

"Good," Diaspro said. "Now get going, you've got a lot of work ahead of you."

"Hey Sky-whoa." Brandon watched the other boy stumble into the dorm. "She really rattled you, didn't she?"

"W...what?"

"Bloom. Flora called us, told us you were looping. Congrats on joining, by the way."

"...right." Sky nodded. "Looping. Time travel..."

"...You need a moment?"

"She almost took off my head."

Brandon winced. "Yeah. Um. Sky, you know why she did that, right?"

"I... I... Diaspro threw a ring at me, and Bloom almost burned my head off." Sky sat down on his bed heavily. "She was willing to kill me."

His squire stared at him for a moment or two.

After a moment, he sighed and pulled out his phone. "Flora? Yeah, can you pass a message on to Bloom for me? Tell her she overdid it and needs to stay away from Red Fountain for a bit. Yeah, I know, I know, but... trust me on this, it's going to take a while. Maybe not as much for Diaspro, but you may want to tell her to stay away too. I'll let you know when it's okay. Thanks, Flora."

Sky was still staring into nothing when Brandon put away his phone.

"Alright." He sat down next to him. "How much did they tell you?"

"About... what?"

"About the loops. How much did they tell you?"

"...nothing. They said nothing."

Brandon took a deep breath. "Hoooooboy. Alrighty, I'm going to have to tell you the whole story, and it's going to be a long and complicated one, but I need you to listen, okay?"

Sky managed to nod faintly.

"There's this tree called Yggdrasil..."

Hey, I'm actually in this one! Barely, but I am there!

29.1: Name a video game protagonist who isn't a kleptomaniac of some description.

29.2: Timmy's clearly been taking lessons from River Tam...

29.3: Freaking *Deadpool.*

29.4: On the one hand, overkill. On the other hand, *Billy.*

29.5: That's a thing they can do?

29.6: Still a better sanitarium than it was in baseline.

29.7: Pity those who can't see with their feet.

29.8: I don't think that's Flora's facepalm they're hearing. Now excuse me, I seem to have developed a headache.

29.9: Hell hath no fury...

Chapter 30

30.1 (lord Martiya)

"Are you going to kill me?" Sky asked the Trix when they showed up.

"Nope. We just felt it was better showing you what you need to redeem yourself from." Stormy said

"That was one BAD Loop…" Darcy stated.

"What's your angle?" came the obvious question.

"The angle is that we adopted Diaspro as a fourth Trix." Icy replied as she assembled a holoprojector. "That, and Yggdrasil already screwed you over with this."

In the projector, Sky could see himself being confronted by a rather upset Bloom and Stella about Diaspro's recent suicide-and the funeral that "Sky" skipped in favor of having a pic-nic with Bloom.

"But Bloom, dear, I just didn't feel to ruin your happiness for that." "Sky" told her. In front of Diaspro's parents. "Say, why don't you-"

"Sky" couldn't talk anymore. Not when Bloom applied the universal male-defeating move on him.

"Please tell me you made him pay." the Looping Sky asked the Trix about the sociopath he had been in that Loop.

"Not exactly." Icy continued as she showed him another scene.

In the projector were the Trix and Riven, hidden somewhere over the throne room of Eraklyon's royal palace.

"OK, Riven, explain how did you have the entire security plan." "Icy" asked the Specialist.

"Sky forgets that walls have ears." Riven replied. "Now, I hope you aren't just killing him…"

"That would make him a martyr and wouldn't stop this civil war." "Darcy" replied. "No, we're going to show the world some of the dirt we have on him as soon as the press conference starts. OK, here it go-"

And before the Trix could ruin Sky, the Patchamen barged in on live TV.

"Prince Sky, prepare for humiliation!" the leader shouted. "We, the Patchamen-"

"Sorry, but we are not the costume shop that ripped you off." Sky replied.

"That's it! Napkins!"

"Did-did they just beat the sociopath to death with napkins?!" Sky asked.

"Ninjas." Icy deadpanned.

"Right… Then how did you stop the civil war?"

"Your funeral was on live TV, so we crashed it with our Ancestors' spirits in tow." Darcy explained.

"And now you know. And remember, knowing is half the battle!" Stormy quipped before getting cuffed by her sisters.

30.2 (Awesomedude17)

Bloom blinked as she saw the sight before her.

"Roxy, what are you doing?"

"I saw a video in the Hub and decided 'why not?'"

"Uh huh."

"Anyway. On the top. A one, two, three, four..."

"Beep! Beep! I'm a sheep! I said, beep beep! I'm a sheep!"

"Baaaah!"

"...It's a work in progress."

Bloom sighed. At least this wasn't something that could destroy something.

30.3 (Masterweaver)

"...Stormy, what are you doing?"

"Collating data."

"...what?"

"Icy, how many loopers from our loop are romantically engaged?"

"...what does that have to do with-"

"Flora and Techna. Darcy and Musa. Stella and Brandon. Bloom and Sky, kind of, possibly, it's complicated. Aisha and Nabu-that's all the Winx Club members, except Roxy."

"Stormy, I don't-"

"That's ten loopers, Icy! Ten out of, what, fifteen? Diaspro, you, me, Roxy, and Timmy. Factor in Helia and Riven, and you have seven unattached."

"What's your point?"

"My point is, for some reason, our loop in particular has a high tendency toward romantic shenanigans. Which means it is all but inevitable that you and I will find ourselves a pair-and if we don't act soon, it'll either be each other or somebody that doesn't fit our sexuality!"

"Stormy, I think you're taking this way too seriously."

"AM I? AM I, ICY?! You've read Fand's writings! And we've already got one married couple, and possibly another on the way-"

"Look, Stormy. Calm. Down. We are NOT a teenage melodrama. We're people. We'll fall in love, or we won't, of our own prerogative."

"But-but the charts! The data! If I don't get this right we might-"

"We won't. Okay? We'll be okay."

"...if you're sure."

"I'm sure. Besides, you haven't factored in all the possibilities."

"...what do you mean?"

"Well, for one thing, we could start dating outside our loop."

"...oh. Right. I guess... I guess I was overreacting a bit."

"Tch, I'll say. I'm just glad I caught you before you did something crazy like try to create a threesome."

"...Oh my god."

"Stormy, what-?"

"Oh my god! That's why Bloom and Diaspro didn't work! They're both in love with Sky, and they don't realize it isn't exclusionary!"

"...Ugh. Stormy, seriously-"

"We have to be slow about this, though. We have to be subtle, give the three of them chances to interact with each other and come to terms with their own emotflrrburwrgglgrrglll-"

"Bad Stormy! Bad! Remember the last time we tried? COOL DOWN!"

30.4 (lord Martiya)

"Run that by me again?!" Sky found himself saying as he Awoke looking at a younger blonde with a red ribbon in her hair.

"YES!" a woman-no, a human-looking demon, according to Loop memories-wearing Chinese clothes, said as she pumped her fist. Loop memories also told Sky the demon was his assistant in a plan to take over the world for a powerful eldritch abomination and was crazy and in love with him.

"Just my love life." the blonde, Minako, told him. "Say, you look kinda... Loopy."

"Yeah, I'd need some Anchoring..."

Then Sky's assistant was shredded into tiny pieces by a white tomcat that had appeared from nowhere and landed on Minako's head, just as Minako morphed into a young woman that looked remarkably like a blue-eyes Stella, only more muscolar-and wearing a strange body suit that reminded him of sailor suits.

"Welcome to the Sailor Moon Loops, Sky, I'm Sailor Venus, the local Goddess of Love and War, and this is my assistant Artemis." she presented herself. "Now, I take you have some issues with your love life?"

"How do you know?"

"Besides having watched your Loop as a cartoon in the Hub? Look at who you have replaced." Artemis replied.

Sky did just that, and found out he was replacing someone who had been in love with Sailor Venus from their previous lives-and so this life he purposefully joined the enemy to make her fall in love with him and then KILL HIM, just to make sure she wouldn't freeze up the wrong moment when she realized her sense of duty came before her own happiness. And right before he Awakened she had told him something unexpected.

"Are you really dating the daughter of a politician with a plan to screw her father out of his money, a plan your girlfriend had?"

"Since the baseline, and we're gonna do that as soon as the Loops end." Sailor Venus confirmed. "Now, Artemis, go make sure the Princess didn't leave anything dangerous while Sky tells me about his troubles with Bloom."

The cat jumped down of her head and left, leaving Sky alone with the self-proclaimed Goddess of Love.

"I suppose it could help..." he said, and started talking.

"The good news is that I know how to help you. The bad news, it's gonna be hard." Venus told him after his tale ended.

"Please, tell me."

"The problem is, the two of you fell in love before knowing each other. And that's not exactly good, trust me. Or trust Ace, the guy

you're replacing. Anyway, Bloom apparently fell for you because she is a very romantic girl who loves fairy tales and you came up and swooped her off her feet right as she was in a vulnerable moment thanks to that Mitzi and social isolation, while you appreciated her attentions and the knowledge she was after you for YOU, and not the crown.

"Fast forward to the Loops, and she matured and became more independent. While you... Well, you remained you. That Loop with the sociopath you didn't help on that. End result, she still has affection for you, but she needs more. She needs someone who can stand at her side, someone she KNOWS will be there for her for herself, someone she has some chemistry with. So my advice is: find yourself, find your dedication, and, most importantly, GET TO KNOW HER! At worst you'll both have closure, but at best you'll put that ring on her finger."

"Got it. Thank you." Sky replied as he swore to himself to become what he should.

"And if you get back together, I'm going to make sure your kisses will make her understand she means everything for you."

"What?"

"Have you forgot? We're shooting a film with a love story, and we're the leads! And before you ask, Rei won't burn you down, she knows I'm trying to help."

30.5 (Masterweaver)

"Bloom Domino and Isa Schnee, Flora Fiala-Victoria and Techna Fiala-Victoria. You claimed the White Bishop pieces. You will be known as team BIFT, led by... Bloom Domino."

"What's a Baglafecht?" Bloom whispered to Icy.

"I don't know, how do you-?"

"It's a type of bird," Flora explained. "Yellow and brown."

Techna smiled faintly as the four of them walked off the stage. "Well, Bloom, you're in charge again..."

"Brandon Ericson and Stella Solaria, Stormy Schwarzenegger and Timothy Steele. You claimed the Black Knight pieces. You will be known as team BSST, led by... Brandon Ericson."

"So we're hound dogs," Brandon mused. "I guess we're going for dark colors?"

Stella snorted. "You guys go for that, I'm sticking to white and gold thank you."

"Why am I called Schwarzenegger?" Stormy said grumpily. "Do I look like a Schwarzenegger? Do I?"

Timmy shrugged as they stepped off the stage. "This loop might need last names. Or it could just be Yggdrasil's idea of a joke."

"Diaspro Isis and Aisha Andros, Musa Melody and Darcy Dunn. You claimed the Black King pieces. You will be known as team DAMD, led by... Diaspro Ackstein."

"Well, I guess I am a princess," Diaspro mused. "And diamonds are a girl's best friend, I suppose."

"You're going to love it here," Aisha assured her, grinning wildly. "I can't wait to catch up with Ruby, maybe actually meet her sister and get a real fight!"

Musa chuckled. "Gets catapulted into a forest of shadow monsters, and is up for another bout. That's our Aisha."

"Shadow monsters..." Darcy mused as the quartet joined the crowd. "Do you think I could control the Grimm?"

Roxy Shepard and Riven Garnet, Sky Ericson and Zwei Gagnon. You claimed the White Queen pieces. You will be known as team RRSZ, led by... Roxy Shepard."

"Team Razzmatazz?" Roxy shrugged, her dog-like tail wagging. "I mean, I can see how it would be hard to arrange those letters into anything resembling a color."

Riven gave her a flat look. "I'm amazed they let somebody so young into Beacon. You must have truly impressed the staff."

"Excuse me?" Sky cleared his throat. "Headmaster Ozpin, I think there's been a mistake."

The man at the microphone quirked a brow. "If you are going to object to my choice for your team leader-"

"No, I'm sure Roxy can do that fine. It's just... I don't think Zwei should be my partner."

"And why is that?"

Sky stared at him. "...Headmaster... he's a corgi. A dog. A small dog, that any of the Grimm could gobble up in one bite."

Headmaster Ozpin took a long, slow sip of his coffee.

"Zwei passed the entry exam, and his references are remarkable. And you certainly saw how he handled himself during initiation. Beacon Academy prides itself on being inclusive to all sorts of applicants."

"...what."

"Now, if you're done voicing unnecessary complaints, I would like you to get off the stage. I have other teams to name and assign leaders to."

"Headmaster-!"

"Come on." Roxy grabbed his elbow and dragged him off stage with a small grin. "I'll make sure Zwei does his best, alright?"

Ozpin watched them go, a faint smile on his lips. Perhaps it was cruel of him to play his little jokes on visiting loopers, but... well, Zwei had seemed up for it. And perhaps they would learn something during their visit to Remnant.

He turned to the students standing just offstage, some of whom were giving him playful glowers, and shrugged helplessly. "Now then, who's next?"

30.6 (Jeanne Summers)

"Hey, Fand?" Diaspro addressed the sky, in a vague way, unsure how to speak with the Winx Loop's Admin. "I don't know if you can hear me, but I was kind of wondering... ummmm... I know I'm still on the MLE Watch-List, but I was hoping..." She let out a sigh and tucked a lock of hair behind her ear.

"Look, Fand, I feel like I'm being crushed, always trying to stay on my best behaviour, so I was hoping I could, maybe, just fill in for a minor villain for a loop, not a successful one, but I'd just like to, be a little bad without worrying about going too far or getting in trouble for it."

The fairy looked at her watch, time was almost up for this loop.

"So yeah, if, if I could do that, or not, I just... please?"

The Loop ended.

Diaspro became aware of being held in a dark, cramped space with several other bodies. Something was happening outside. Above her a sliver of light shone, and she made her escape. Standing and

stretching as she sorted through her in loop memories she grinned, letting herself slip into character.

"Ahhh! After ten thousand years, I'm free!"

Destroying stuff was kind of fun, Diaspro had to admit. Playing a villain was exactly what she had needed. She'd spent so long trying to be the best she could be, trying to not worsen her MLE status, that she hadn't really let loose and had a chance to deal with the negative emotions she often felt.

She knew several people had died from her actions as an evil sorceress hell bent on destruction, but at the same time she was able to use the expected collateral to examine herself.

How did she feel killing these people, even knowing they were likely killed over and over again, even knowing they'd be alive again as soon as the loop reset?

"Hey," Diaspro startled, almost toppling into the freshly laid flowers.

"Uh, hi?" she brushed her hair from her eyes, and paled. Tommy Oliver stood a few feet away, his hands in his pockets, stance relaxed. On the inside Diaspro was panicking, did he know who she was, what she'd done?

During the time she'd had him under her spell, she'd never met the man face to face, certainly not in jeans and a hoodie. But that didn't mean anything.

"So you're the one filling in for Rita." He knew.

"Uhm, yeah," Diaspro shrank in herself.

"Huh, didn't expect to see you here, given..." he nodded to the graves. The markers of her victims.

"Yeah, I can understand how you'd be confused."

"Seems like you want to talk about it."

"Are you offering to listen?"

"I have time," he gestured for her to go ahead.

"You might regret this," he smiled, "okay, get ready to be unloaded upon."

"- so here I am, trying to figure out if being a villain in baseline, means I am inherently villainous."

Tommy eyed her over their table in the juice bar, working through everything she'd told him.

"Okay, first of all: I think it's a good thing that you're exploring all the facets of your personality in an effort to understand yourself, being on the MLE watch list can't be easy, I can't even imagine the pressure you must be feeling, having that kind of stigma over your head. Second of all: there's a watch list for that?"

Diaspro laughed, that one questioned seemed to be the inherent response.

"Third," he continued, "I don't think being a baseline villain means you're inherently villainous, I think every one has these dark impulses you described, you've just been putting yourself through extra worry because of your status, you keep worrying that extra inch. But you don't need to, the fact that you worry at all is a good sign. The fact that you acknowledge your darker side is okay, it means you can stop it from getting out of control. You are doing fine."

"Even though I killed those people?"

He smiled again, "people."

"Huh?"

"You call them people, you feel bad enough about what you did that you visited their graves. If you were as far gone as you're scared you might be, you wouldn't still see them as people."

Diaspro felt a weight lift from her as she realised he was right. She still had a lot of things to work through, but they weren't as bad as she thought.

"Thanks Tommy."

"Uh, my queen? I don't mean to bother you, but... it's been a while since we attacked the Power Rangers, shouldn't we, uh, attack them?"

"And how are we supposed to do that with my wand out of order?" Diaspro's in loop lackeys eyed the magical stave, which was in pieces on the floor. "Now be silent, I'm getting a headache!"

Goldar peered around the corner, spotted his queen by her magical telescope and sighed. Normally he'd be happy she was enthralled by her telescope, but normally that meant she was gazing through it and plotting, not surrounded by the sections, sitting cross legged on the ground.

"Alright, I have a new plan to DESTROY THE POWER RANGERS!" Her proclamation was met with cheers.

And the implausible sound of thunder in space.

Zedd was shouting at her, her minions were panicking. Diaspro was panicking, was this supposed to be happening? Was it because she hadn't actually conquered Earth?

Diaspro hadn't wanted to be an actual world enslaving/wrecking baddie.

Zedd raised his staff to cast a spell.

Despite the fact she did technically work for him, Diaspro's knee jerk reaction brought her own staff to bare, magic swirling.

The two forces met and-

-Diaspro blinked, a wave of dysphoria washing over her as she took in the forest passing by the car window.

"Woops," she pressed her hand to her mouth, trying not to giggle.

"Every thing alright sweetie?" She turned to Sheriff Charlie Swan and nodded.

"Yeah, I just realised I forgot to pack a few things, but it's fine, there's a store here."

Diaspro wasn't sure if she'd actually destroyed the planet of Magix all though loops ago, or if her 'memories' were just a manifestation of her guilt.

What she was sure about, was that she had just blown up the Earth's Moon, by accident.

"Hey! You're Crazy!Bella."

"Excuse you! I am not Crazy!"

"Really, cause last time you were here, Charlie stuck you in a loony bin."

Diaspro paled as she realized what the girl must have been talking about. "That... is a long story, I'm not... 'crazy' anymore. And my name is Diaspro."

"Leah, local Anchor. How do you feel about vampires?"

"What kind of vampires?"

"The kind that sparkle."

"... real vampires don't sparkle."

30.7 (Awesomedude17)

Aisha had been through this billions of times. Whenever she Awoke this late, she knew she'd have very little chances to make this work.

"Nabu, where are you going?" Riven shouted.

"The chasm! I have to close it!" Nabu explained.

Aisha's world began to dull as this particular event happened again. She mindlessly went through the usual motions. Everyone did. Even Flora did so.

The dark magic began to subside, and Aisha ran to Nabu, shouting his name.

She begged him to stay alive. She begged him to stay strong. She begged him to pull through.

"These eyes, Aisha, mustn't cry... I love you..."

Nabu gave out one last breath. It happened again.

He was dead.

She was practically on autopilot at this moment.

After beseeching for the Spell of Life, Aisha saw it. The Ethereal Fairies answered.

And then someone grabbed it.

Ogron.

Aisha was practically at her wit's end. She mindlessly demanded that he give the Spell back.

"Oops. How careless of me."

He cruelly dropped the spell. Time slowed down in her eyes.

Everything seemed lost.

What could she do? What does she have? How could she stop this?

"Thanks Sokka. So tell me, who did I replace?"

"My sister, Katara."

"Any special abilities?"

"She's a waterbender."

"Really? Neat! I can't wait to use it. I mean, I've never controlled... water... before..."

"Let's me guess, you had water powers?"

"My Morphix is connected to the ocean. Why didn't I think to use water attacks?"

Why didn't I think of that? No time left to waste.

Aisha, in a blink of an eye, began to grasp at the water in the ground with both her fairy magic and her waterbending prowess.

Just before the Spell of Life hit the flower, Aisha drove a spike of water through the ground, deflecting the Spell, and launching it towards her. Not bothering to notice Ogron's reactions, she moved the water she had, and launched it towards him.

The water pierced his chest, and he collapsed. Wasting no time, she used the Spell of Life on Nabu.

Please let it work. Please let it work. Please, for the love of all that is holy, let it work!

"U-ugh..."

"N-Nabu?"

"Aisha?"

Aisha began to embrace Nabu. "Oh Nabu, you're okay! Please don't die on me again. I beg you, don't die again."

"Aisha... you're crushing me."

Aisha opened her eyes, and then back off with an embarrassed chuckle. "Sorry. I'm just... I'm just so glad that you're okay. I so glad that you're alive." Tears began to form in her eyes.

"Shh... don't cry Aisha. Those eyes mustn't cry."

The two looked at each other, and moved in for a kiss.

"Uugh... I... I cannot move. What have you done to me!?"

Aisha got an annoyed look as she turned to the immobile Ogron, who had a panicked look in his face.

"Aisha, what did you do?" Flora asked.

"My guess, that water attack I did hit him in just the right way to paralyze him. He's not going to be moving for a long time."

"You blasted fairy. You'll regret this!" Ogron spat out.

"Enough of this." Riven took took out his mace and swung it onto Ogron's face. After doing it again for good measure, he was sure that the wizard was dead.

Nabu wincing at this, he soon realized something.

"Gantlos. Anagan. They're still out there."

"They're probably going to try and hide. We did just kill two of them." Sky said.

"Where would they hide?" Timmy asked.

"...The Omega Dimension?" Flora suggested.

"..."

"Huh, good guess Flora." Nabu remarked as Anagan and Gantlos appeared to be arguing.

"What do you think they're blabbing on about?" Riven asked.

"Guessing that without Ogron to keep them in check, they've decided to attack each other, or at least try to figure out what to do." Techna said.

"So what do we do?" Brandon asked.

"Let's take no chances. Take them down." Sky said.

"Let's." Aisha nodded, determination in her eyes.

The group approached them, surprising the two.

"Alright you two, we're giving you two choices. Either you give up, or we fight you, and considering that Ogron's dead-"

"He's dead? Impossible!" Gantlos recoiled in shock.

"It's true. I dealt the crippling blow, and Riven, the finishing one." Aisha said. "So what's it going to be, surrender or fight?"

Anagan shook his head. "We should give up."

"What? Why should we give up against these fairies?" Gantlos said angrily.

"These fairies are accompanied by the man who killed Duman, and that fairy took out Ogron."

"Peh. She probably got lucky. We can take them."

"So you choose to fight?" Sky spoke.

"We do."

"Girls, I believe you have something that can take these two down."

"Right." Bloom said.

"Believix!"

The six fairies, in their Believix forms, approached the two wizards.

Anagan looked between Gantlos, and the fairies, and let himself fall to the ground.

"Anagan, what are you doing?"

"We can't win this, Gantlos, so I'm giving up."

"Why you-" Gantlos didn't even finish that sentence as the Winx froze him in place. The Specialists promptly grabbed Anagan, and put out all the stops to keep him from using what magic he had left, and put him in chains.

"You made the right choice, pal. Now let's bring you to the proper authorities.." Sky said as he walked Anagan out.

Aisha sighed. It was over.

The Wizards of the Black Circle had been defeated, though that was a given.

What Aisha really was proud of was that she had managed to succeed where she usually failed.

Feeling a hand on her shoulder, she looked over to see Nabu, smiling.

"Hey Aisha."

"Nabu. Nice to see you."

"Same here. You know, I was wondering, where should we have our wedding?"

Aisha's heart skipped a beat. "I can't really think of a place at the moment. After all, you did die, and I did revive you."

"Heh. True. I was thinking we'd have it at back home at Andros. What do you think?"

"Good idea. We should probably talk with our parents about when too."

"Right. This was an arranged marriage."

"Until it was broken off, and then we reinstated it."

"Well, couldn't find a more perfect girl for me."

Aisha smiled. "And I couldn't find a more perfect man."

Nabu smiled back.

The two leaned in, and shared a kiss.

Fand stumbled to her terminal.

"Status report?" Fand said, zombielike.

"Uhh... We have a prompt to Activate Nabu... uh..."

"Nabu! Let me see!"

Miele showed the prompt that showed that he was ready to Loop.

"When did this happen?"

"A couple iterations ago, where Aisha rescued him from the Wizards of The Black Circle and a rather dramatic kiss to boot. Here, let me show you." Miele showed a recording of exactly that happening.

"Wow. This is exactly what I needed to bring my spirits up."

"Why were you so tired anyway?"

"We ran out of coffee. Aphrodite took the last one, but I got the last laugh."

"How?"

"AUUUUURGH! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SKIN?!"

"A little magic to change her skin color to whatever she consumes for the next thousand years. She also took a cherry from Madoka's sundae, and I bet she's regretting that now."

Miele laughed. "Good on you. I never liked her."

"Who does? Lazy bitch."

Several Loops later.

"Well, I just defeated The Wizards of the Black Circle with a rubber chicken." Flora nonchalantly said as she walked in and grabbed a root beer. "What's the plan for the rest of this Loop?"

"I don't know, but I do know this. Pay up." Musa grinned.

"Ugh. Fine." Aisha handed Musa a fifty.

"Musa, you seem to be betting a lot more often than usual. Is Darcy encouraging you?" Stella asked.

"No, she's not."

"I think she is."

"No, she's not."

"Are we interrupting anything here?" Brandon asked.

"Not really. What bring you here, Brandon?" Flora asked.

"We've got a new Looper."

"So soon? After Sky Woke up?" Bloom noted.

"Yep. Aisha, get ready."

"Wait, you don't mean..." Aisha went silent.

"Come in Nabu. She's waiting for you."

Aisha's heart skipped a beat when Nabu came in. As he approached the Winx Club, he sighed.

"So, I guess I'm 'Looping' now. Brandon already gave me the basics, so I'll just say it. Aisha, I'm pretty sure that when you saved me, I became a Looper, so I guess all I have to say is... thank you so much. I guess we'll be together forever. What do you say?"

Aisha was speechless. All she could do was walk forward, and rub the back of her hand on his face.

"This not a dream. This is real. I... I'm glad you're Awake now, Nabu. I love you."

Nabu smiled. "I love you too."

As the two shared a kiss, Everyone clapped in celebration. When they broke the kiss, Nabu then wonder something.

"Since Brandon told me that Flora was the Anchor, what has happened while I wasn't Looping."

"I married Techna, Musa and Darcy are in a relationship, Bloom told Sky that he has to work for Bloom's affection, Sky's ex, Diaspro, is Looping and I'm fairly sure that she had a hard time last Loop I was Awake with her in because a vampire MLE named DIO or someone close to him killed me in my sleep, so he knew I was there, and he wanted nobody to stop him in his goals of world domination or something, I'm part vampire and part Chaos God, Roxy is someone who doesn't take no for an answer and occasionally, a man named Naruto kicks Darkar, Valtor and the Wizards of the Black Circle into low orbit when they inevitably destroy his attempts at ramen. Did you get all of that?" Flora rattled off in in a single breath without thinking about it.

Nabu was trying to process everything he heard, and failed.

"Can you repeat that from the top, and do it a little slower? I'm afraid I don't understand a thing about any of that."

"You know what, let's put it in writing, and take it from there."

Aisha couldn't help but laugh at Nabu's confusion. To his credit, he ended up laughing alongside her.

Nabu just had to admit, this was going to be interesting.

30.8 (Jeanne Summers)

Musa Awoke just inside the dormitory door, opening her mouth to greet her friends, she choked. Loop memories swarming through her mind, she let slip a small wail.

"Musa?!" All four of her friends were by her side in an instant.

"Home, I have to..." brushing them off, Musa let her Zoomix wings carry her home to Melody. Stumbling through the door she called out.

"Mum! MUM!" her mother appeared around the corner, looking concerned.

"Musa, sweet heart what is it?"

"Mum, oh mum!" Musa fell into her mother's embrace, weeping openly and holding her tight.

She thought she might be dreaming, her mother was holding her, brushing her fringe aside and looking concerned.

"Do you feel better now?" Musa nodded with a sniffle, "and do you want to tell me what brought this on? I thought you were starting at Alfea today, was some one mean to you?"

"NO, no, I've already made friends, I... I just missed you so much."

Her mother laughed, smiling indulgently, "you've only been gone a few hours."

"It felt like longer," her quiet, sorrowful tone made her mother pause.

"Musa, you know you can tell me anything right? No matter what it is, even if you think I won't understand, you can tell me."

Taking a deep breath, Musa explained as best she could, about a computer and a tree.

"Oh my poor brave girl."

"Girls," Faragonda stood in front of the assembled school, "it is my pleasure to introduce our new music teacher, Professor Matlin."

The Winx Club drowned out the polite applause of the rest of the school with their excited whooping and cheers.

Sitting on the docks of their home on Melody, Matlin and Musa held each other tightly. Matlin had long ago come to terms with her daughters strange fate, and her own tragic destiny, but before the clock ran out, there was one last thing she needed her baby girl to know.

"No matter where you go, or what you do, I want you to know: I am always proud of you, and I will always love you."

"Thanks mum."

"And I hope that your girlfriend treats you right."

"She does mum."

"Good."

Musa Awakened just inside the door of the Alfea dorm. Sinking to the ground she started crying, Flora was by her side in an instant.

"I'm okay," Musa cut her off before the 'are you okay's could start. "I'm okay, I'm just... I got to have so much time with her, and she was proud of me."

"Happy tears?"

"Happy tears," not entirely true, but Flora let the half lie go.

30.9 (Jeanne Summers)

"You know what's always surprised me?"

Diaspro looked up from where she was perched on the edge of her tank, referencing a manual on the engine.

"The... Spanish Inquisition?"

Bloom scoff and gave her a 'duh, no' look.

"The fact that you've never gone after Yoshinoya, I mean, you've gone after all the other bad guys but..."

Disapro put her wrench down. "You think I've never gone after Yoshinoya? Seriously? Offing Yoshinoya is practically my hobby."

"Wait really?" Roxy popped her head out of the nearest hatch.

"Um, yeah... I started off just dropping him in sink holes, or ensuring rock slides while he travelled, crumbling cliffs, that sort of thing." Roxy nodded, that made sense, playing to Diaspro's magical strengths. "Then I started getting inventive, I may have crossed a line around the time I locked him in a sealed room and had Zing bring in an army of Fire Ants... but then again there was the time..."

"...and of course making sure his fish wasn't properly prepared so he died of food poisoning felt kind of like cheating after that."

Musa, who had wandered over at some point during Diaspro's recollection looked at the fairy of Gemlight like she was seeing her in a whole new light.

"That was... unnecessarily brutal," she whispered in horror.

"Which part?" the blonde asked.

"The part where you cursed him so he - and only he - had to listen to that horrendous J.B. Music every second of every day until he offed himself."

"Musa's right," Roxy agreed, "even the thing with the rabid lemurs wasn't as bad as that..."

Bloom just walked away, staggering slightly till she reached the open air outside the shed, bending over she tried to breathe in a way that wouldn't make her sick.

She'd forgotten, no longer being the target of Diaspro's ire, just how vindictive the other girl could be.

"Bloom?" The girl in question looked up.

"Oh, hi Miho, sorry, just... taking a break, we'll get right back to the tank repairs in... in a little bit."

So that was quick.

30.1: Apparently you *can* beat someone to death with a napkin. I've been wondering about that for a while now...

30.2: Uhh...

30.3: Actually, you kind of *are* a teenage melodrama...

30.4: Sound advice.

30.5: Well, this is the start of... something? Not sure what, but it should be interesting. More to come.

30.6: Huh. I guess Fand takes requests.

30.7: NABU!

30.8: No, I'm not tearing up. It's just dusty in here. I swear!

30.9: Thaaat's alarming.

Chapter 31

31.1 (Jeanne Summers)

Bloom Awoke underwater, looking around she recognised her sister's cave in Lake Roccaluce, though there was no sign of her sister.

"Daphne?" She moved her arms, preparing to swim outside when she froze. Her arm *glowing* and *see through* in the corner of her vision. Looking down she realised her *entire body was see through and glowing!* "Calm down Bloom, calm down, you're fine..."

Decades of memories hit her, growing up in the Domino Palace, a very different group of friends by her side as she attended Alfea, the betrayal of her friend, the birth of her baby sister Daphne, and the attack on Domino.

Followed by almost a decade and a half trapped as a spirit between one world and the next.

She had to find Daphne, her baby sister, her poor lost baby sister, she needed Bloom, Bloom had to go to her, she had too, she-

Bloom felt like she smacked into an invisible wall as she tried to fly to Alfea.

- was stuck in the lake.

Daphne glanced around nervously, as Stella introduced her to everyone as Princess Veranda of Callisto. The girl called Flora stared at her, slack-jawed, like Daphne had done something unbelievable.

"Ummm, hi?"

"Huh, I feel like I should be less surprised than I am," Flora propped her hands on her hips and looked Daphne over, like she was trying to decide what to do with her new room mate.

"Daaaphneee, fiind meee Daaaphnee, laake-"

"That is a terrible ghost voice," Daphne told the glowing dream lady, blandly. The lady pouted.

"Sorry, I was trying to sound mysterious, turnabout is fair play and all."

"Uh... huh?"

"Sorry, sorry, hi, I'm Bloom, your big sister, I'm trapped in Lake Roccoluce, if you want to come talk to me." The duo looked at each other for a long moment, before Bloom spoke again, "I mean if you don't want to that's fine too, there's... plenty of fish I can talk to. Sirena would be a better conversationalist, but she's frozen with the rest of our home world."

"What does that even mean?" Even for a dream this was strange, and Daphne felt very lost an confused.

"Oh well, you see-"

"WAH!" Daphne flailed out of bed as her alarm went off. Across the room, Flora sat up, a gun in one hand and a spell in the other.

"Who's attacking!?"

"No one, sorry, I just had a really weird dream."

"Oh," Flora put the gun back under her pillow and cancelled the spell, "well then, do you want to talk about it?"

"No," Daphne eyed her room mate with concern, "that's fine... although... you wouldn't happen to know a place called Lake

Roccaluce, would you?"

"Yeah, it's like twenty minutes of walking from the school, it's really pretty out there." The duo started getting ready for the day, they met up with their three other dorm mates as they crossed the common room.

"Oh! I know, we could have a picnic!" The four girls turned to Flora.

"Pardon?" Techna raised an eyebrow.

"Sorry," Flora looked a little abashed, "Daphne was asking about Lake Roccaluce earlier, I was just thinking, after classes this afternoon, we should all head down there for a picnic."

Stella gasped in delight, "I have the perfect picnic outfit!"

Musa nodded, "sounds good to me."

Flora smiled as a glowing Bloom filmed a shocked Daphne in on their heritage.

Bloom Awoke in her dorm.

"I've been a terrible sister haven't I?"

Flora smiled in sad understanding, beside and behind Bloom, their friends made denials and enquiries about the statement.

"I hardly spend time with Daphne, she's almost always off in the Lake, or visiting the castle, even after she got to be human again, I didn't see her very often. The most time I spend with her is usually when she's or history teacher. I didn't realise before just how lonely it was for her."

"Well then," Stella said, hugging Bloom with one arm, "let's go see her."

Around them the group agreed to make picnics with Daphne more of a thing.

31.2 (Awesomedude17)

"So sometimes you're Aisha, and sometimes you're Layla?"

"Yep, and occasionally, we slip between Italian and English."

"Yeesh. You're definitely not one of the lucky ones."

"There's worse cases. Some Loopers don't even have a set gender, and a Looper named Robin can have his wife turn into her mother while her cousin could become his son."

"Oh my God." Nabu blinked in horror.

"Staying sane through all that requires that you learn to go with the flow. Heck, the Loops where all the genders are flipped are some of the worst for Bloom, Diaspro and especially Stella. I could practically see the sparkles in Stella's eyes when she loudly said that she trumped Yggdrasil."

"So how'd Yggdrasil respond?"

"Null Loop with other Loopers who hate gender swapping, gender swapped."

"So the lesson is don't tempt Yggdrasil?"

"Yep."

"I'll keep it mind so something on my mind doesn't happen."

"Hmm?" Aisha raised an eyebrow, only to decide, "You know what, keep it to yourself. I'm sure no one wants to know."

"Thanks. Even I don't want to know."

31.3 (Awesomedude17)

Nabu Awoke as he snapped a picture with his camera. After a quick moment to gather his bearings, he looked into his Loop Memories.

My name is Nabu Norris. I'm a tourist visiting Japan and stopped in Morioh Town. I have a fiancé back at the hotel room after a bout of food poisoning. Her name's Layla, so that means Aisha is here. Anything else?

That question was interrupted when he felt something pierce his chest.

"Agh! What the!"

An arrow was digging itself deeper into his chest.

Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!

Once the arrow completely disappeared into his chest, the wound began to heal itself, much to his confusion.

He looked around and saw a blond man run off, holding a bow.

"Hey! Get back here!" Nabu gave chase.

"Okay, head count. Who's Awake here?" Josuke Higashikata asked the group before him.

"Present." Jotaro curtly said.

"I'm Awake." Koiche replied.

"Same." Okuyasu said.

"As am I, Josuke." Rohan finished.

After a head count, Josuke finally made a conclusion. "Guess we've got two visiting Loopers, unless-"

"Gramps isn't Awake." Jotaro said.

"Two visiting Loopers. Wonder who they are?"

"AAAARGH!"

"Keicho!" Okuyasu ran off, leaving a group of confused Loopers.

"Yare yare daze." Jotaro mumbled as the group ran off to figure out what was happening.

They eventually came to a strange sight where a cherub was slaughtering Keicho's Stand while some Jamaican looking person was staring at the fight with sheer confusion.

"What kind of Stand is that?" Keicho yelled in frustration.

"I don't know! I can't even control it!" The man looked on, unsure what to do.

"An Automatic Stand. Just what we need." Josuke remarked with sarcasm.

"Brother!" Okuyasu used The Hand to bring the cherub Stand closer to him. It prepared to attack when...

"Wait, stop! Don't hurt him!" The man begged.

The cherub looked at his apparent user, and then turned towards Keicho and Bad Company.

And then a gold bird-like Stand appeared from the power lines, struck Keicho through the chest, and disappeared with the bow and arrow he had.

"Brother, NOOOOO!"

The cherub visibly relaxed and returned to the man, showing endless affection.

"...Would someone explain to me what just happened?!"

Jotaro groaned. "You take this one, Josuke."

"Uh, right. So, that cherub there is apparently your Stand."

"Stand?"

"Let's go find someplace private. Rohan, your house is the closest."

Rohan groaned. "Follow me."

Nabu sighed and stared at his Stand.

"So you're saying that this thing is basically an extension of my soul?"

"When Bad Company appeared, you felt threatened, and this thing attacked anything it perceived a threat. Since this is an Automatic Stand, you can't control it. You can only point it in the right direction." Josuke explained. "Believe me, it's not exactly normal, but I'm sure that with enough time, you could have something resembling control over it."

"And it's clearly being affectionate towards people it doesn't perceive as a threat." Rohan annoyingly said as the Stand messed with his hair like a child.

"So, anything else?"

"You could name it." Koichi suggested.

"I don't know... Magic?"

The cherub agreed vigorously, to the ruination of Rohan's hair.

"So your Stand's called Magic now. Congrats." Okuyasu clapped.

"Ugh, how am I going to explain this to Lay-LAYLA! Oh jeez, I've got to get going!" Nabu ran off.

"Wait, Nabu! Get back here! We're not done with the explanation!" Josuke began to give chase.

Jotaro sighed. This was going to be one of those Loop, wasn't it?

Nabu, after about 15 minutes of running, soon found himself outside his hotel room. Fumbling for his keys, Josuke ran up to him.

"Hey! We weren't done explaining!"

"Look, not be mean or anything, but I had to get to my fiancé. She's sick, and it's almost late."

"Oh... I'm sorry! I didn't realize!" Josuke bowed as he began to apologize.

"Look, it's nothing. We'll talk another day. For now, I've got to see her."

"Alright." Josuke said, noticing someone out of the corner of his eye.

Nabu opened the door and walked in.

"Layla, you feeling better? Layla? I got something for your stomachache. Layla?" Nabu looked around. No sign of Layla around here. He even went so far as to check the bathroom for her, but nothing.

"Nabu? I don't think your fiancé's here." Josuke said.

"I- This isn't right. She's tough, but her food poisoning was really bad. She was practically puking her guts out this morning."

"Hmm..." Josuke lifted up one of the sheets and found something.

"Perhaps this bloodstain should say something."

"Bloodstain?" Nabu looked over the blood.

"What? This is some kind of sick joke. I mean... Layla hadn't been killed or anything, right?"

"The blood's fresh, and I noticed that someone was walking away calmly."

"Someone? Who? Who?" Nabu almost shouted.

"Our resident serial killer, Yoshikage Kira."

"S-S-SERIAL KILLER?!"

"Yep. Guessing he snuck in and... look, I think I should explain everything about this branch. If what had happened it true, than all I can say is... I'm sorry for your loss."

Nabu's world slowed down right then and there.

"Layla... I... I mean... This can't be... Oh God." Nabu passed out.

"Oh, son of a bitch." Josuke groaned. Picking up the nearby phone, he called Rohan and relayed the location of the hotel and the room number.

This wasn't good at all.

"How's he taking it?" Jotaro asked.

"He's been silent for a long while ever since he woke up. He hasn't even acknowledged our presence." Rohan explained. "I took the liberty of using Heaven's Door to write down everything we know about the man into his sub-conscience. With any luck, he'll join us in

hunting the bastard, and maybe Kira won't kill any of us, or use Bites the Dust on us."

"Hmm... and what about the Stand Users everywhere?"

"Nabu will probably not bother, but he's going to need to know a lot about what Stands can do, and how to counter them. I'll probably take him with me to handle Oyanagi, and maybe have him meet Kanedaichi."

"Two of the less dangerous Stands." Jotaro said.

"As long as Nabu doesn't attack Superfly, and I handle Boy II Man again, he'll be fine."

"Nabu doesn't strike me as someone who's attack anything."

"Me neither, but I've noticed something while using Heaven's Door on Nabu."

"Hmm?"

"He's currently feeling an anger that surpasses his previous bout of rage, one that's outright murderous. Nabu clearly cared for Layla, or rather, as she's known in the Loops, Aisha."

"Nabu's a Looper?"

"Yep. I've read it all. I suppose I've got my next manga ready to try out after I handle my usual work."

"I doubt Nabu will appreciate your actions, Rohan."

"Relax, Jotaro, I haven't ripped out any memories. What I do know is that Nabu's a Looper from Alfea, and we all know who hails from there."

"Flora and Diaspro."

"Diaspro? This is the first I've heard of her."

"It's been a long while ago, Rohan. I'll talk about later. For now," Jotaro lowered the brim of his hat. "we've got a manhunt to tackle."

31.4 (Jeanne Summers)

The specialists were busy at work, repairing their ship, which had taken a beating in a non-baseline mission. The quartet were disturbed from their task by a wolf whistle., looking over the group saw Diaspro, with a box in hand, grinning cheekily at them.

"Hey boys," she strode closer.

"Diaspro," Timmy greeted her, "thanks for coming, sorry if you were busy."

The fairy waved him off, "nothing that couldn't wait, besides: I brought vain muffins." Brandon jumped out the pile of ship parts faster than Sky could track, almost teleporting to Diaspro's side.

Sky frowned as he stepped closer.

"Those are cupcakes," he said, "not muffins."

Diaspro scoffed, "Sky, please, cupcakes are just muffins with their make up on," seeing his confused look she clarified, "it's a 'healthy eating' joke from Earth. Muffins are healthy, cupcakes are not." She saw the clarity cross his face.

Picking a cupcake from the box, Diaspro called "Riven," to the boy hanging higher up on the ship's side, working on the damaged systems that passed just beneath the hull. He stopped fiddling to turn to her, spotted the cupcake she was poised to throw, and shucked his gloves, preparing to catch.

Sky was actually really impressed the other boy managed to catch it without getting frosting on his hands.

"Hey," Diaspro's quiet call drew the prince's attention back to her, "vain muffin?" She offered him the open box, but he shook his head, "alright, suit yourself."

She placed the box with some of the less used tools, and walked over to a giant tear in the ship's hull.

"Want me to patch it Timmy?"

"Yeah, please, it is why I called you."

"How did you know, though," Sky asked the three on the ground, "how do you all always seem to know who's awake with the Pings?"

"We don't," Brandon explained, "Techna actually came up with this method, after a very drunk Diaspro-"

"I was not drunk!"

"You were drunk," Timmy argued back. Brandon continued on as if he hadn't been interupted.

"- broke her phone and that some how translated to her brilliant thought: what if the way to fix the Pings, is by **not** fixing *The Pings.* " The trio pulled their cell phones out of their Pockets to show the prince. "Techna and I managed to create these phones, in our home Loop, they can tell you who's Awake and roughly where they are, but in outside Loops, you'll only get who's in the Loop with you. Aaaaaand they only work if they phones are out at the same time, so we all take them out once the Pings start.

"Basically we just call each other," Brandon summarised with a shrug, "I'm surprised Techna hasn't set you up with one yet."

Sky looked over to Diaspro, rather than replying, as the fairy reached for the top of the jagged gash in the metal of the ship's plating.

Before he could call out to stop her, she place her hand against the sharp, ragged edges of the metal, and dragged her bare hands down over the broken plating.

Sky choked on his warning when, instead of being witness to Diaspro shredding her own hands, the metal moved like liquid under her touch, the expansive damage repairing itself under her ministrations. Coughing to clear his throat he saw neither of the other specialist with him were surprised by Diaspro's actions, Riven already back to work and ignoring everything else.

"She..."

"Oh right, you probably didn't hear yet," Timmy at least had the decency to act chagrined. "A while back, there was a variant loop, and Diaspro was the fourth Trix sister, the witch of metal."

"That's right," Diaspro interjected, the hole closed, "no more jewellery stains for me," jokingly referencing the 'dreaded green circles' of cheap jewellery. Her smile slipped from her face as she saw the lost look on Sky's face. With a sigh she stepped over to him, pressing gently at his shoulders until he turned and began walking.

"We're just going to step outside and have a bit of a chat," the fairy informed the other boys as she walked Sky away.

"A chat?" he asked her.

"Yeah, we haven't really spoken much since you started Looping, and I think it's time we did."

Outside they sat down, facing each other, and Diaspro began.

"I'm going to talk for a bit, and I want you to listen, *really listen* to what I'm saying, when I'm finished I'll give you a minute to think about what I've said, and then you can talk. I know you're still having trouble with the Loops, but you're lucky, I spent over a hundred Loops not knowing what was going on. I thought I was in hell Sky. I

was very in love you, you were The Love Of My Life. For the first few dozen Loops, I thought I'd been given infinite second chances to fix our happily ever after," Diaspro held up her hand and made a shushing noise when Sky went to speak, "I'm not done yet." He shut his mouth.

"Eventually, the futility of my task sent me off the deep end, I broke, and it took a long time before I could even start to pick up the pieces, but I did. Then I finally began to accept that you would never love me, and chasing you would only bring me sadness, grief, anguish and pain. I deserve better than that, I deserve better than chasing after you, so I begun to let you go.

"I still love you, and I might always love you, but it is because you were my First Love, you *are* my Prince, one day you *will be* my King, and I will serve Eraklyon as the Guardian Fairy our world deserves. I've made my peace with that."

Diaspro tried not to let it hurt when Sky relaxed at her words, a tension he probably didn't even realise he carried, slipping from his shoulders. She'd guessed that he'd still been feeling awkward around her, given what their history.

"The thing is, once I stopped chasing you, I managed to stand still long enough to see what was around me. Bloom is my friend now, and I care about her as well. I know that we may have over reacted, and that you didn't deserve millions of years of unrealised resentment, for you it only happened once, for us it happened tens of thousands of times.

"You cheated on me, pushed Bloom into an awkward position, publicly humiliated us both because you couldn't find a way to be honest enough. I know there was a lot of pressure on you, from several sources, but you could have opened up to Bloom more.

"I spent a long time trying to break up your relationship, so I know its weak points, and the biggest, is communication. You and Bloom, I've seen the inevitability of it, in the first run of our reality you two

connected, **deeply** , and no matter how many times you were pulled apart, you found your way back to one another.

"But things are different now, you two can't keep up this on and off again nonsense, it is not healthy. You both deserve a healthy relationship. I know you're struggling with feeling inadequate, like you can't match up to her expectations, but Sky, there are less expectations than you think. Bloom waited for you, she's still waiting for you. I get that you feel a bit lost with the Loops, but you can ask us for help, and we'll all help.

"One of the first things you should do, though, is talk to Bloom, tell her everything that you're feeling, let her respond, really listen to her when she tells you what she's feeling. Most importantly, don't make assumptions, if you think she said one thing and meant something that you feel angry about, ask her, let her know how that made you feel, and why it made you feel that way."

Diaspro rubbed her hands over her face and sighed.

"Sorry, that was a verbal dump, just: You two have a connection, but both of you need to start talking about how you feel, and listening to each other. You two make one another happy, and you both deserve to be happy. Don't worry too much about the Loop stuff, you'll catch up, just ask someone when you need to, it's perfectly fine."

Diaspro gave a gesture to let him know she was done, Sky sat quietly for several minutes, opening and closing his mouth several times, as he discarded things he almost said.

"When they told me," he finally began, "that they'd chosen my future partner for me, I decided then and there, that I would never love her, no matter who she was. It was my only way of rebelling, I wanted to be able to chose things for myself, instead of having them chosen for me all the time.

"It stayed with me, even when we got older, like a tiny pebble in my shoe, and in the end... I like you Diaspro, this new you, the old you

from when we kids, not so much the Diaspro in between, but... you *do* deserve better.

"But I think I deserve better too, you are amazing, Diaspro, don't get me wrong, but I deserve to be able to choose, and I chose Bloom before I even realised it. The way she makes me feel, the why of it, it's hard to put into words, you know? When ever I try, I just mess it up. She deserves someone better than me, someone who doesn't keep making mistakes, but I don't want to let her go!

"I want to be the man she deserves, but I'm so far behind, I- I..."

It was clear to Diaspro that Sky couldn't figure out how to say what he was feeling or thinking, so she interrupted before he worked himself into an anxiety attack, reaching over to put a hand on his.

"Let me tell you a secret Sky, you are the man that she deserves, because of two reasons: she chose you, and you love her. Everything else can be worked out, you can take as much time as you need to sort yourself out, but my advice, is you talk to her. Communicate, it doesn't have to be spoken, just communicate."

Sky sat for a long time, taking in Diaspro's advice, he wondered when she'd gotten so... advice giving. Attempting to lighten the mood, Sky tried for a joke.

"Thanks for this Diaspro, but we should get back now, before someone starts a rumour I'm cheating on my girlfriend again," he grimaced, realising how much poor taste the joke was in, only after it was too late to take back.

"Oh, don't worry, Bloom knows your virtue is safe with me. There was a variant Loop a while back, that Sky was actually, truly, deeply, madly in love with me." Sky looked Horrified. "As soon as I found out, I fled all the way to Earth to have a good cry in Bloom's Parent's bathroom."

" *Why* ?"

"Because I reasoned you'd never think to look for me on Earth."

"But... why the bathroom?"

"Because I was crying, last time I cried over you, we were still finding my tears in the sheets a week later, and I changed them like, five times." Diaspro suddenly fixed him with a (slightly terrifying) intensely curious look, "why, where do boys do *their* **messy** , uncontrollable sobbing?"

31.5

Sky nervously stepped through the gates of Alfea. He double checked the bouquet of flowers he was carrying. Daffodils, Eglantine Rose, Rainflower, and one single blue rosebud, which he was a bit worried about. This wasn't really that kind of bouquet, and he really didn't want it to come off that way. He squared his shoulders, then headed for the Winx dorms.

"Okay, run this by me again," Nabu said.

"Sure," Flora said. "The Anchor is the first person to Awaken. Loopers start activating after that primarily based on their connections to their Anchor."

"So it makes sense that the Winx would activate early," Nabu said.

"Pretty much," Flora said. "It probably helps that we seem to be the most stable aspect of the loop."

"Of course," Nabu said. "And you fight the Trix so much that it makes sense that they'd activate soon too."

"Yep," Flora said. "Again, they're also a stable part of the loop."

"And then us boys," Nabu said.

"Right," Flora said.

"Now here's where I get confused," Nabu said.

"What about?" Flora asked.

"Wasn't Helia your boyfriend back in baseline?" Nabu asked.

Flora blinked, then flushed slightly. "Yes, yes he was."

"Then why is he the last of us to Awaken?"

"That is a good question," Bloom said, looking up from her book.

"Well, um," Flora said. "I haven't dated him in a very long time. Since I was still counting loops with three digits. Since then I've, well, I've kind of been trying to avoid him."

"Why?" Nabu asked.

"Because Helia crushes on her," Bloom said. "And then he flirts with her."

"Essentially," Flora said. "Which is... uncomfortable."

"I can't believe you didn't realize how blatantly he was flirting with you in baseline," Bloom said. "You had to have Aisha spy for you, and even then, you almost didn't believe it."

"Yes, well, I was a different person back then," Flora said. "Anyways, I'm not really interested in him anymore."

"Well, thanks for helping clear things up for me," Nabu said. "I should probably get back to Andros. See you in a few years."

"See you then," Flora said. Bloom waved, still focused on her book.

Nabu waved back, then opened the door. "Oh, Sky," he said, his eyes nearly crossing as he took in Sky's hand, clearly raised to

knock. He stepped back into the room a bit. "What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to talk to Bloom," Sky said.

"Oh," Nabu said. "I'll just be going then." He stepped past Sky and beat a hasty retreat down the hall.

"What is it, Sky?" Bloom asked, getting to her feet. She glanced at the bouquet. "You'd better not be asking me out on a date."

"No, no, it's, um, it's not that kind of bouquet," Sky said, awkwardly holding the flowers up. "I just... I just wanted to... could we talk some time? Not a date, just, you know, get to know each other a bit better?"

Bloom considered him carefully. "I'll think about it," she said, taking the flowers.

"Thank you," Sky said. "I'm... I'm sorry about... I'll just... go." He turned and headed down the hallway, looking like a man defeated.

Bloom sighed and closed the door, then pressed her forehead against it.

"So, do you really want to get back together with him or not?" Flora asked.

"Yes," Bloom said. "It's just... It's so hard." She held up the bouquet. "And then there's this." She looked at it carefully. "Weird flower selection."

"There's probably a reason for it," Flora said.

"It can't be convenience," Bloom said. "Daffodils, sure, but no one makes bouquets of Eglantine Rose or Rainflower, and blue roses aren't easy to come by, even with magic. No, this was deliberate."

"Do the flowers have some sort of meaning?" Flora asked.

"Maybe," Bloom said. "There's a lot of symbolism associated with flowers on Earth. Every now and then my mom gets really into it. My adoptive mom, that is."

"She does own a flower shop," Flora said. "What do they mean?"

"Daffodils are the easy one," Bloom said. "They're usually a sort of 'please notice me' kind of flower. I think the meaning Sky's going for here though is new beginnings."

"That makes sense," Flora said. "What about the others?"

"Eglantine Rose... Ugh, this is a rare one, but if I remember correctly, it's supposed to mean a wound that needs to heal."

"Huh," Flora said. "Sounds like an apology so far, and a request for a fresh start."

"Yeah," Bloom said. "Rainflower definitely fits with that. It's usually used as a sort of 'it's not you, it's me' rejection flower, though it's really rare, but if this is an apology bouquet, Sky probably added it because it means the giver needs to make up for past mistakes."

"That all makes sense," Flora said. "And the blue rose?"

"Love at first sight," Bloom said.

"I thought that was lavender," Flora said.

"That too," Bloom said, frowning. "That can't be right. Lavender's easier to get than blue. It'd have to be one of the other meanings."

"Which is?"

"Either mystery, or... or achieving the impossible," Bloom said.

"...maybe you should talk to Sky," Flora said.

"Yeah," Bloom said heavily. "Maybe I should."

"Okay, what happened last loop?" Musa asked, watching Sky and Bloom chatting across a table. It wasn't particularly intimate, or even friendly, but it was polite, with a certain potential for more. "Last I saw, they weren't speaking."

"Sky gave her flowers," Flora said.

"That's it?" Musa asked.

"There's more to it than that, but that's the basic story," Flora said. "Let's leave them in peace. They have a lot to talk about."

31.6 (Awesomedude17)

The Trix plus Diaspro wandered around the shithole that was Paradise, Arizona. Thought it was a Null Loop, the four had already armed themselves with knives and guns in case someone had the bright idea to attack them.

Regardless, it was a typical Friday afternoon.

"So girls, what's up for tomorrow?" Diaspro asked.

"Dunno. Guessing we'll all go to a nightclub or something." Stormy asked. "Hopefully it won't rain cats and dogs then."

A cat soon splattered all over them as it fell from a great height.

"Not literally." Stormy said as she wiped the gore from her eyes.

"What the hell?" Icy said as cats fell from the sky and everyone began to kill each other.

A newspaper hit Darcy in the face, and she read the headline out loud.

GOOD GOD ITS THE APOCALYPSE!

Random violence increases, military and police overwhelmed

"You know, if you're going to make that a headline, you could at least learn the difference between 'it's' with a comma and 'its' without." Darcy remarked.

"Now's not the time to go grammar nazi, Darcy." Stormy said. "Let's figure out what the hell is going on."

The four managed to escape to the hospital nearby. As they discussed their options, a man was wheeled away with a gunshot wound in his head.

"So, what're we going to do?" Diaspro asked.

"My guess, get the hell out before we die." Icy said.

"Hey baby, how about we go to my place and UNF!"

Darcy had a look that said 'I'm so done with this shit' and grabbed the offending voice's groin in a vice grip.

"Sorry boy. I'm taken, and by a lady to boot, so piss off."

"AGH! I'M SORRY! LET GO OF MY BALLS!"

"Hmm..." Darcy smiled, let go, and promptly kicked the man in the balls. "There. Much better."

"Ow, my balls."

"So, aside from raining cats, perverts and now there's a zombie horde stumbling over here." Stormy pointed at a group of zombies that were swearing so much, a sailor would blush.

"Okay then, shotguns out, it's one of those Loops now." Icy said as they grabbed a bunch of shotguns and aimed at the zombie heads.

After two days of fighting, the group found themselves laughing as they dragged a zombie into a massive room by the balls.

"Man, that was a fun weekend, girls! You really know how to spice up a zombie apocalypse." Diaspro laughed some more.

"Yep. This is the best weekend ever!"

As they walked up the steps, they found a nuclear warhead on top of the desk that was there.

"...Worst weekend ever." The four said in unison.

The Postal Dude checked the rearview mirror as the nuke went off. He honestly couldn't give two shits about who was caught in the blast because he knew that there was no one important.

And then he Woke up at the same time Champ began to chase some random animal and run back to the nuked shithole.

"Goddammit, Champ."

And then he remember that the Trix was there.

"Fuck me, those witch bitches are going to fuck everything up."

And then he crashed and went into a coma for about 11 years.

Adminspace (Facepalmist)

Tyr glanced through Skuld's latest hardcopy report, this one regarding the latest Admin performance assessments. Just another chore for the highest-ranked Administrator within Yggdrasil...usually.

The one-handed Norse god paused as his eyes fell on one strikingly out-of-place entry: a black mark against Fand's name, with a very

particular eyes-only code signifying perpetual veto on the Queen of the Fairies ever gaining another realm to Administrate.

He glanced up at Skuld. She stared back, scrupulously blank-faced. But having known her for so very long, the look in her eye was one he recognised well. This was a truly serious matter, not something so specious or personally embarrassing as one of Fand's little tales gone beyond the pale.

"Did she deserve it?"

"Oh yes." No further information was volunteered.

Tyr eventually sighed and returned to the reviews. Some things, as the code had signified, were just better off buried...

Skuld nodded and withdrew, thankful that her boss (and father, but mostly *boss* given the subject matter) had not forced the matter. She would not have enjoyed trying to explain it. She didn't even want to *think* about what Fand's unthinking fit of 'inspiration' had caused, let alone what it might yet cause should word ever get out. The damage had the potential to be incalculable, to a magnitude so horrifyingly broad that the Chief Debugger had reluctantly reined in her initial impulse to level punitive *and official* disciplinary measures at the hapless, fatally soft-hearted Admin at the centre of this...this *debacle* .

And it could have been *even worse* . At least Flora had already resigned herself to that Miele's 'death' and largely moved on. At least that Miele's soul had been warped in such a way that she could cope with the strain of imposed immortality in a way that even most Loopers could not. (Her heart went out to the poor woman, it really did. Miele herself had done nothing but catch the interest of a being so far above her as to render her helpless - and now she was essentially under 'house arrest', with only her captor to communicate with. Well, her and Skuld - she still had to code the back-door through which they could converse at need.) At least a copy of the pre-merging Miele had been kept on file, so she could be re-inserted

into the universe-iteration she had been extracted from - with or without the experience she'd acquired, at hers and Skuld's discretion. At least Miele's baseline data had remained untouched, and in fact remained so distinct from the modified system-bot 'Miele' that the baseline Miele yet retained an infinitesimally possible probability of becoming a Looper in the normal fashion.

And at least no-one else would ever have to find out. At least, not if they were careful. And she had done her very best to clue Fand in on just how careful they needed to be.

In retrospect, it was fortunate that there was such a long walk back to Fand's office - and that hers was on the way. With the specter of her father questioning Fand's assessment behind her, Skuld could now devote some brief time to considering how to best ameliorate Miele's terrible situation as prudently as she could.

It would have been *so* much easier if Fand had just agreed to put the derivative Miele in long-term storage. But Skuld could not force the matter without making it public, which would defeat the entire purpose of attempting to close the floodgates in that manner. Not to mention - *never* to mention, in fact, by order of her father and the major pantheon heads - a certain dirty little secret that had been well buried, back in the bad old days before the Loops truly kicked into gear...

It was not the first time that an Admin had done something similar to what Fand had done. It *was* the first time that an Admin had managed to get past the patches and permissions implemented to prevent such a thing from being allowed. Which meant that either the way Fand had pulled it off was an original method, or-

Reaching her office and kicking off with a quick message to Fand to wait, Skuld checked; and double-checked. And sighed.

-the barriers had failed on Fand's terminal. On closer inspection of the code, because of some coding confusion over said terminal's

exact location in the system. Because *of course* Fand getting crammed in the fridge so often would come back to bite them.

Skuld fixed up that coding - and not just to close the barn door after the stampede, there were a host of tiny little issues that said repair-job fixed - and moved on to the confidential set of laws that remained on stand-by to codify and proscribe this kind of thing. Most of them were not particularly well-known, except to those who had been 'on-deck' at the time, so to speak. However, there was *one* aspect that some of the better coders were familiar with...

She re-read what was there, and made some notes as a nebulous plan began to solidify. Then she continued on her way.

"Right," Skuld announced, storming into Fand's office and closing the door. "Fand, is your little helper available? It's time for your assessment results." Then promptly re-opening the door, hammered an opportunistically eavesdropping Loki in the head and punted him off a good way down the corridor.

"I'm here," Miele called out from Fand's terminal.

Skuld nodded and held up a datapad with two words typed in for all to see: *Play Along* .

"All right Fand... I've looked over Miele's coding," which she had, in only a cursory fashion to confirm her suspicions of what she was looking at...not that Fand knew it, or would ever find out, "and she *seems* to be sound - only time will tell on that one, though. If you'd cleared this beforehand, we might actually have been rewarded for coming up with this new method of constructing AI bots. But..." Skuld shrugged, "Well, she's *too* good."

"Too good?" Fand obligingly fed her the line.

"Too realistic. I could admire the way you used the existing character-framework as an intuitive shortcut, but considering all the

steps you skipped over? There's a reason why you go through the channels to commission this, dammit!"

Fand blinked. "...Steps?" she blurted. "Someone's done this before?"

Skuld sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose. Was Fand serious...? " *Of course* someone's 'done this' before," the Chief Debugger exclaimed, complete with air-quotes, "some of our best coders have this as one of their jobs! It's a long, hellishly complicated process - building each personalized AI-class bot from the ground up, quality-checking at every *micro* -stage for errors and potential failure points, running them through simulation after simulation to make sure we didn't screw up somewhere with the framework or logic routines or basically anything else we can think of. And it's not something you just rush through *on an impulse* !"

The Norn huffed, reining her very real temper in. It didn't help that everything she said was in fact true. There were reasons that such high-level bots weren't well-known, and one of them was that the coders who were good enough to pull that kind of thing off - *with full QA, thankyouverymuch* - within any realistic time-frame, were precisely the coders who were busy as Admins *and* being drafted in said expert roles to help fix everything *else* . That the three foremost experts in the field were herself, Hephaestus and Saraswati was no coincidence, after all.

Meanwhile, she went back to the door, opened it up and nailed the opportunistically eavesdropping Coyote in the head. Then punted him down the corridor, landing him on top of the comically groaning Loki. Needless to say, she was feeling rather more satisfied when she continued.

"Nonetheless," Skuld cut Fand off as she finally went to make a response, "your new method *seems* to work. But we need to be certain. So: everything on your method is confiscated, and your terminal has been blocked from *ever* experimenting with this again. The real experts are going to go exhaustively over this program of yours, and establish how to use it in a way that works with the proper

QA procedures. At that point, *if* it checks out, you'll get credit for coming up with the program and we *experts* will start incorporating it into our roles. As for your punishment for breaking the rules *you didn't even bother to learn about* ...! ...I'll decide what that is later." She now turned to the terminal from which Miele was gazing thoughtfully on. "Now, Miele."

"Yes?"

"You're provisionally cleared for active duty. Try not to get noticed, and just tell anyone who asks anyway that you're an experimental personalized AI-bot, and everything else is classified proprietary indefinitely."

On-screen, Miele shrugged. "All right, I can do that."

"See that you do. And..." Skuld artfully hesitated, her voice softening. "Sorry about this, Miele. It's not your fault that Fand's program built you too close to the template. Drop me a line if you ever need to talk."

The digitalized entity who could once have been a Looper for the Winx Club Branch nodded with a smile. "Okay... and thanks Skuld."

Skuld nodded back and turned to leave.

"Wait!" Fand called. Skuld stopped. "What did you mean 'too realistic'?"

The Chief Debugger glared at the Queen of the Fairies over her shoulder. "Answer me this, o Goddess of Shipping: rumor starts spreading that there's a quick, easy way to construct realistic, AI expies of all your favorite people from the World Tree's Branches... And now imagine what someone like Zeus would do with that information."

Fand had started going sparkly-eyed in a worrying fashion, only to blanch as the final statement registered. Skuld witnessed with

satisfaction and headed once more for the door.

"And that's just the tip of the iceberg," she finished as she left, twirling her hammer on the way out in such a way as to thump the opportunistically eavesdropping Anansi in the face. Said spider-god was sent flying down the hall to land on the comically groaning Loki and Coyote, who had no doubt been listening the whole damn time. Unsurprisingly, all three tricksters fled the moment she started making her way towards them while brandishing her hammer.

'That ought to do the job ,' Skuld mused. Rumor *would* spread (whether or not she helped it along), and research would be conducted - but it would be aimed at the process for commissioning personalized AI-bots, and only those who had reason to recall the bad old days would think to look deeper. And there was no proof left there, either; not to mention, even Zeus would (as he *had*) keep their silence if they ever worked out what had really happened here. Meanwhile, inquiries into the commissioning process would reveal a waiting period about the same length as the request for a vacation - and that was for the *established* process, which was understandable given who had to do the coding for each commission. As for the 'new process'... well. It was a simple enough matter to tack on a few more metric shit-tonnes of red tape (probably of the background-check, psych-evaluation and superior authorisation variety) to stretch out that 'waiting period' into a delivery date of *n* -1, and that was if the 'new process' ever did get forced to 'pass' its own evaluation.

Hopefully... hopefully that would be enough.

31.1: We really have been neglecting Daphne, haven't we?

31.2: Do not taunt the Happy Fun Tree.

31.3: Really, Nabu? You couldn't come up with a better name than that?

31.4: ...I don't have words for just how much I respect Diaspro for doing this. And she's fictional twice over. Huh.

31.5: Time for the healing to begin.

31.6: You're supposed to nuke it from *orbit* . I swear, you just can't find competent exterminators these days...

Adminspace: Not everything done for good reasons is a good thing. Now if only Fand understood that concept.

Chapter 32

32.1 (Callii)

[Prompt: Activate DAPHNE] [Y/N?]

"Fand? You might want to see this…"

Drowsily, Daphne blinked open her eyes and turned to look at where Thoren was lying in the bed next to her. She smiled softly. "Good—morning?"

Thoren wasn't there.

Still half-asleep, but significantly more alert and panicked than she had been before, she glanced around at her surroundings. Walls of dark rock, a purple shell-like growth, a distinct blue tint to the whole place…

She lifted a shaking hand in front of her face and was only half-surprised to see it glowing golden.

"Oh, no…" she whispered, hand flying to her throat as her breathing stuttered. "No, no, no, no, no…" She glided to a wall, lashing out with her other hand as if she might be able to break through the dream into reality. "I can't be back here, I just can't!"

Pounding fruitlessly on the rock for several more minutes, Daphne eventually sunk to the floor and curled around herself. "Did I… imagine it all?" she whispered, voice choked.

She remembered the events so *clearly* , that was the thing. Bloom and her friends going on their Sirenix quest, the Trix and Tritannus teaming up to gain the power of the Emperor's Throne, her being brought back to a corporeal form through Bloom's Sirenix wish,

teaching at Alfea, marrying Thoren… could she have really made up the entire thing?

Daphne buried her head in her *(golden)* arms. Her eyes burned with tears, but in this form she couldn't even shed them.

When she finally stood up from her spot on the floor, it occurred to her that she had no idea what was going on outside of her little cave. If nothing beyond the Winx's Sirenix quest had happened, then where were they? What— and how— were they doing?

"Bloom," she called, sending a psychic message out to her sister. "Bloom— oh!" Daphne gasped when she saw Bloom appear before her. Her sister looked so young. When she'd last seen Bloom, she had been in her early twenties, mature, all grown up. This Bloom had wide eyes, messy red hair, and—

"Who's there? Who's calling me?"

—and she didn't remember Daphne.

"It's me, Bloom!" Daphne cried, significantly more desperately than she remembered saying these words before. "Don't you remember me?"

"Who— who are you? What do you want?!"

Daphne reached out, trying to grasp her sister's hand. "It's me, Daphne! I'm your sister!"

"My what?!" Bloom finally turned and saw Daphne, hand outstretched, and glowing bright enough to make her cover her eyes. "I have a sister?"

"Yes! Bloom, please, remember me!" Daphne could feel Bloom slipping away as she woke up, and tried once more to touch her. Her hand passed right through. "Please!"

And then Bloom was gone, dissolved like Daphne's imagined life, and the nymph was alone once more.

When Bloom sat up with a gasp, Flora had been expecting it for awhile. The loop had been going close to baseline, and Flora, being the only one Awake, had decided to just go along with it until she felt like throwing it off. But didn't Bloom usually say something about remembering? Flora sat up in bed. "Are you okay, Bloom?"

"I… I don't know."

Well, *that* was a bit worrying. "Did you have a bad dream?" Flora asked, running through her mental list of loopers that might have gone under the radar and could be messing with Bloom's dreams.

"Not bad, just… okay, this might sound weird, but there was this woman. She was glowing really brightly, and she said… she said she was my sister, Daphne."

Flora froze.

"Daphne?" she said, struggling to keep her voice level. Did someone replace the nymph? Usually Bloom didn't find out Daphne's name, let alone her relationship to her, until much later. "Do you know where she might be?"

"No," Bloom said, swinging her legs over the edge of her bed and jumping to her feet. "But I know how I might find out."

Flora wasn't sure quite how this had gone in baseline— she hadn't played a lonely loop straight for a long time— but she was fairly certain it had never included her and Bloom creeping out to the library in the dead of night to look up information on a certain nymph. She supposed knowing Daphne was her sister was a bigger motivation for Bloom to find her, rather than just knowing her name.

"Okay, let's see if this works." Bloom took a deep breath and placed her hand on the magical catalog. "Daphne." A couple of books flew from the shelves and landed in front of her. Opening one, she glanced over the pages. "No, this isn't what I'm looking for…"

"Get more specific," Flora, who knew how this went, suggested.

"Well, I don't really know much *about* her," pointed out Bloom. "All I know is that her name is Daphne, she's some sort of ghost, and she's my sister."

The catalog, still underneath Bloom's hand, registered the keywords and searched the shelves.

"Look!" Bloom exclaimed as a single book drifted over to her and flipped open. "The… Royal Family of Domino."

For the second time that night, Flora froze.

"Daphne, Princess of Domino," Bloom read aloud. "Princess Daphne was raised from a very young age to take on two great responsibilities: that of the Crown Princess, and that of a Nymph of Magix. One of nine, the power of the Dragon Flame was passed to her by the former Nymphs when she completed her training, and she and the others used their powers to defend the Magic Dimension from evil. However, when Domino was attacked and subsequently destroyed, Daphne was… Daphne was killed saving her baby sister." Bloom took a breath, voice ragged. "Some have claimed to see her ghost in the depths of a cave in Lake Roccaluce." She slammed the book shut.

Was that book always in the Alfea library? was Flora's first thought, followed by *She's going to fly off to Lake Roccaluce, isn't she.* "Bloom, you can't just go without telling anyone," she said, only a little futilely.

"I'm *not* not telling anyone, I'm telling you," was the response as Bloom took off through the halls, Flora following as quickly as she

could.

"...didn't have to follow me, you know."

"Of course I did, silly. You're my friend and I want to make sure you're okay. And if that means following you out to a lake in the middle of the night to find a ghost, well, I'm here."

Daphne's head turned toward the entrance of her cave as she heard familiar voices filter through the water. *Did Bloom come to find me in the physical world? Then where's Sky? Wasn't he here when this happened?*

"Daphne!" her little sister called, and now Daphne could see the bright red of her hair floating around her.

"I'm here, Bloom!" she cried. "I'm right here!"

Bloom turned, swam straight for the cave. "Daphne!"

Hope rose in Daphne's chest as her sister floated in front of her, tentatively reaching out a hand. "You're here," she said wonderingly. "You really came to find me." She closed her incorporeal fingers around Bloom's hand and pretended she could feel its warmth.

"Of course I did!" Bloom told Daphne of how she'd found her, adding, "My friend Flora helped— she's here too!"

Daphne nodded at the other girl, who looked… contemplative? She wasn't sure. "Thank you for helping Bloom. I'm glad she has friends like you."

"Oh, I was glad to do it," Flora said. "It's very nice to meet you, Daphne."

"Thank you. It's lovely to meet you as well."

Flora turned and glanced at the surface of the lake. "Bloom, it looks like the sun is coming up soon. We should get back before someone notices we're missing."

"Do I have to leave? We just got here!"

"Well, now you know where Daphne is, you can come back and visit!"

Bloom sighed. "Yeah, I guess you're right." She squeezed her hand shut around Daphne's ghostly one, ignoring the way it went right through.

"I've missed you so much," Daphne murmured, feeling phantom tears well up in her eyes again. Had it been only a matter of days since she'd seen Bloom? Was anything in her memories real? She wasn't sure, but… the Bloom standing in front of her had never known her, she knew that.

Bloom smiled. "It's… it's nice to know I have a sister. I wish I could have found you earlier." She opened her arms, as if for a hug, then seemed to remember Daphne couldn't actually touch her and used the gesture to propel herself backwards. As she reached the cave entrance, she waved, and Daphne did the same as she watched her sister swim out of sight.

"I'm guessing this is your first time, then?"

Daphne started. She'd forgotten completely about Flora, who was still there and staring intently at her. "I'm sorry?"

"Okay, it might be easier if I just do this." In a flash of light, Flora's pink Charmix outfit was replaced by a familiar tube top, tutu, and tights.

"You— you've got Sirenix?" Daphne exclaimed, thinking to herself that too many more surprises might cause her to actually pass on. "But how— I thought—"

Flora smiled gently, floating over to Daphne. "Everything you remember definitely happened," she began. "See, there's this tree…"

"...and that's about it."

Daphne's head spun. "That's… a lot of things to know. You've really lived for over a million years?"

Laughing slightly, Flora said, "It's been a *lot* longer than that. I've experienced a lot, grown and changed. We all have."

"Oh." There was a pause for several long moments. "Can you…" Daphne cleared her throat. "Can you answer a question for me?" At Flora's nod, she continued, "Why did Politea betray me?"

Whatever Flora was expecting, it wasn't that. She was silent for several moments, then shook her head. "I honestly don't know. I'm sorry, Daphne."

Daphne slumped a bit, sighing. "That's alright. If I've got loops and loops of living in my future, I can probably find out at some point, right?"

"It might be hard, but, well, we Loopers are nothing if not resourceful. And hey, Daphne?"

"Yes?"

"Welcome to the Loops."

31.3 cont. (Awesomedude17)

It has been about a week since Nabu learned about Yoshikage Kira. After the local Loopers explained why they didn't immediately go after him, he knew that he had make him pay out of the eye of the public. After all, violence is violence, and the non-Looping populace

see Kira as just another businessman going about his rather uneventful life.

He'd have to confront him later. For now, Rohan had decided to take him around town to see what Stands could do, and how not one is the same.

First came some weird kid with a hole in his cheek named Ken Oyanagi, and his Stand, Boy II Man.

"So, explain what he does."

"His Stand basically allows him to take other user's Stand if he wins 3 out of 5 in Rock Paper Scissors."

"...Rock Paper Scissors?" Nabu repeated with skepticism.

"Many Stands tend to not be great on paper, but in practice, there's a lot you can do with a simple ability. Jotaro's daughter, Jolyne, has a Stand that allows her to turn parts of her body into string."

"So you're saying that Stands tend to be better than they sound?"

"Exactly."

"So what happens when he takes my Stand, exactly?"

"Since your Stand's your life force, I'd say you die."

"Okay, so what do we do?"

"Let me handle this, Nabu." Rohan approached Oyanagi and went along with their confrontation as per Baseline. Nabu watched as the two ended up playing Rock Paper Scissors.

When Rohan lost a game, part of Heaven's Door got sucked into Oyanagi's hole, to Nabu's shock.

The game continued, and Nabu could help but question why he was so enticed with a simple game of Rock Paper Scissors. It honestly sounded so stupid, yet here he was, intrigued by the absurdly high stakes of the game.

Perhaps he should see what this world is in the Hub and look into every single part of it, just to be sure.

After a few more games, Rohan won, and Oyanagi attempted to jump right into a truck, to Nabu's horror, but Rohan jumped after him, and both managed to survive.

He hated to see what might be next for Rohan's tour.

"This is Superfly, Nabu, and I see Josuke and Okuyasu are already investigating."

"...A power tower."

"Retired telephone tower, actually."

"That's a Stand?" Nabu asked.

"Yes."

"...You know what, next you're going to tell me that some guy has the ability to soap up anything."

"There is. The other Josuke Higashikata."

"There's another?"

"Yes. He dresses like a sailor, is the fusion of two separate people, his Stand's name is Soft & Wet, and he's, and I'm actually understating it here, odd."

Nabu blinked.

"Okay, I think I've figured this Branch out."

"Hmm?"

"Everything is absurdly serious about how wacky it really is, and you just roll with it."

"Spot on, Nabu. Now, let's just observe Josuke and see what Superfly can do."

Nabu decided to follow Rohan's suggestion, and looked on at Josuke, Okayasu and Superfly. Anytime they attacked the tower, it ended up fighting back. The user, some man also with them moved around the tower with frightening ease.

Eventually, the man was convinced to stay behind, and Josuke and Okuyasu went over to the two who were watching.

"You were just watching us?" Okuyasu shouted.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you help us?" Josuke demanded.

"Nabu is inexperienced and his Stand is unreliable at best, and I don't like you, Josuke." Rohan bluntly explained.

"Oh, how kind of you. Maybe I should show you how I feel about it." Josuke raised his fist.

"Guys, guys, don't fight!" Nabu butted in between the two. "Look, let's just find someplace to relax and cool off."

"You know, I am kinda hungry." Okuyasu said. "I know, let's eat at that Italian place, you know, Trattoria Trussardi!"

"You have an Italian restaurant?" Nabu asked.

Everyone stared with a 'duh' expression.

"Oh, right." Nabu slapped his forehead with his hand. "Doy!"

"So, lunch?" Okuyasu asked.

"Sure. Let's get Koichi too." Josuke said. "Oh, and Nabu, if anything weird happens to any of us during lunch, that's normal."

Nabu had a concerned look on his face.

After the weirdness that was lunch at Trattoria Trussardi, where Nabu found out that he had astigmatism after his eyes popped out of his sockets, an ingrown nail after his shot off his toe like a gun, and a lack of sleep when his eyes cried an almost literal river, Nabu could only be confused that all of that was healed while nobody in the group cared.

At the very least, Tonio was nice, and the two had a pleasant conversation in Italian about why they were both there.

Still, he didn't quite feel all that well about this stay so far, especially after Layla went missing and/or got killed by a serial killer who exploded women to take their hand out for 'dates'.

His own train of thought was interrupted when he bumped into someone.

"Sorry, my bad."

"Ugh, what- Nabu?"

"Riven?"

"You know this guy?" Josuke asked.

"Yeah, this is Riven, a friend of mine."

"Who are these people?" Riven asked.

"Right, Riven, this is Josuke,"

"Hello there." Josuke bowed.

"Okuyasu,"

"Hey." Okuyasu waved.

"Koichi,"

"Hi there."

"and Rohan."

Rohan silently waved back.

"...So, Nabu, I was actually looking for you. I received your call the other day about Layla."

"Where're the others?"

"Busy."

"With what?"

"I didn't ask for details beyond that they couldn't come here. Now, let's talk, alone."

"Riven, they know who likely got Layla, and they've been a lot of help so far."

"Yeah, so how about you give us a chance." Okuyasu said, leaning into Riven's face.

"Get that ugly mug out of my face before I make it even more ugly." Riven threatened.

"Do you think you can just threaten my friend here without consequences?" Josuke shoved Riven.

"Guys, calm down!" Nabu said.

"How about you just piss off, and get that dumb hairdo out of my face."

Koichi, Rohan, and Okuyasu stepped back a few times.

"Huh, what's wrong?"

"Your friend pushed the hair button." Okuyasu said.

"What?"

"What did you say about my hair?" Josuke said.

"That it's dumb." Riven reiterated.

"Why... you..." Josuke's Stand, Crazy Diamond, appeared right next to him, and punched Riven in the face so hard, it sent him flying into a car, embedding him in it.

"RIVEN!" Nabu ran to the barely conscious Riven, who coughed up a little blood.

Josuke then walked up to the two, and used Crazy Diamond to heal Riven. After he shook himself awake, the car then reformed itself, and popped him onto the ground. Riven was absolutely confused at what just happened.

"Never insult my hairdo, you punk. Now get out of my face before I rearrange it." Josuke said as he combed his pompadour.

Riven gritted his teeth, and motioned for Nabu to follow him. After the two walked off, Nabu turned to Riven.

"Seriously? You just insulted my new friends, and got launched into a car for your troubles."

"I don't even know how he punched me so hard, or how he fixed my face. I don't even recall him even throwing a punch."

"Well perhaps next time, you shouldn't insult Josuke's hair. He seemed really sensitive about it."

"Sensitive enough to hurt someone over it. Honestly, what's up with the guy?"

"Perhaps it's best we figure it out later, when they aren't as pissed off at you as they are now."

Riven sighed. "Look, let's just find out what happened to Layla, and then we can talk this out with your friends." Riven walked up to a vending machine, inserted a few hundred yen, and grabbed the soda that came out of it before doing it again, and passing Nabu a can.

"Yeah, sure." Nabu said softly as he noticed Yoshikage Kira walking by the two.

He'd probably have to bring Rohan with him, just to see if Heaven's Door would be useful.

"So, we've got a plan?" Rohan asked.

"Yes." Jotaro replied. "First, we have someone keep watch over Kosaku and Aya, so that Kira doesn't get any ideas."

"So who's watching who?"

"Koichi will keep an eye on Kosaku. Okuyasu will watch Aya."

"So I don't see action?" Okuyasu asked, dejectedly.

"You got dibs last time, Okuyasu. Remember?" Josuke reminded Okuyasu.

"Oh, right! But I'm not getting rid of these scars."

"Just like I won't get rid of my birthmark."

"Onto the next part of the plan." Jotaro interjected. "We need to eliminate Kira discreetly and without raising suspicion. So we'll have to figure out where he'll be best eliminated without suspicion. That's why I took the liberty of having the Speedwagon Foundation supply us with this." Jotaro held up an RC car with a camera attached. "I'll be using this one to spy on Kira while Josuke and Rohan will be on standby to take him out, preferably without anyone getting hurt."

"Anything else?"

"If everything goes to plan, we'll be done before Gramps makes it to Morioh, and we'll have time to relay the news to our visiting Looper."

"What's a Looper?"

Everyone turned to see Nabu and Riven, with the latter having a raised eyebrow.

"Yare yare, why are you here?" Jotaro asked.

"I was bringing Riven here to apologize."

"And I'll admit it. I was an asshole to you, Josuke, so I'm sorry. Now, explain to me what a Looper is, and who you were referring to."

"They were referring to me." Nabu said.

"What?"

"Let me explain." Jotaro said, right before giving the non-Looper version of the multiverse speech.

"So everyone here but me is 'Looping' because a tree broke?"

"That's the gist of it." Okuyasu said.

"And you were the latest one?"

"Yes." Nabu replied.

"How long?"

"Half a million years so far."

Riven raised an eyebrow. "That old? Who's the Anchor?"

"Flora."

"Who else is Looping?"

"Uhh... everyone but Helia, plus the Trix, Roxy and Diaspro."

"Who?"

"Roxy, you haven't met, the Trix are the triplets who acted like they were the hottest thing ever, and Diaspro is Sky's ex."

"You mean the blonde who went into a jealous rage?"

"The very same."

Riven pinched the bridge of his nose. "So everyone we know is Looping from this 'Magix' except Helia?"

"Yep."

"Anything else to note?"

"Flora and Techna are a thing, and so's Musa and Darcy."

Riven's eye twitched.

"You mean both of my exes are together? How into it are they?"

"Uh... very enthusiastically?" Nabu nervously said.

Riven was furiously silent for the longest time, right before he turned to the others. "Where can I find a gym, preferably with a punching bag?"

"Let me give you an address." Okuyasu wrote down the address to a gym and gave it to Riven.

"Thank you." Riven grabbed the note and crushed it, right before walking out.

"I'd hate to see that punching bag after he get's through with it." Koichi remarked.

"Guys, you were talking about Kira?" Nabu said.

"We were about to hunt him down." Jotaro said.

"I'm joining in."

"You sure?"

"He killed my fiancée. I think you know how I feel about Kira." At that moment, Magic appeared, twitching erratically.

Rohan, rather disturbed by Magic's behaviour, then offered a suggestion. "Perhaps Josuke can find Yoshihiro Kira instead while Nabu and I find Yoshikage."

"I like this idea better. At least I don't have to be with this jackass." Josuke said.

"Be that as it may, I hear no other suggestions."

"So that's the plan. We're going to take on Yoshikage Kira, and stop his serial killings this Loop." Jotaro said.

Everyone agreed to it.

Yoshikage Kira was not having a good day. He had to pass up an opportunity to find another lovely hand to take out on a date, some guy from the gym nearby punched a punching bag through a window, which knocked him down and broke a few ribs, and his lunch ended being ruined when he some pompadour wearing punk got into an fight with someone over his hair and knocked over his sandwich.

And now he felt like he was being watched by something. He tried to keep a calm exterior, but he knew that something was wrong.

Eventually, he decided to make a deliberate wrong turn into an alleyway, hoping that whatever was following him would reveal itself by mistake.

After a few meters of walking, he turned around and saw nothing, but made a trap with one of the garbage cans, just in case. After walking through the alley, he rounded the corner, and hugged his body on it. Keeping an eye, he saw an RC follow him.

"Hmm. Looks like someone was watching me. No matter." Kira let his Stand, Killer Queen, appear. Moving his thumb in a motion akin to activating an explosive detonator, he created an explosion that destroyed the RC.

Nothing was following him anymore. Satisfied, he calmly walked back to his house. After closing the door, and sighed. The opportunity to hunt would come soon enough.

"HEAVEN'S DOOR!"

Kira turned to see a picture come to life and attack him. His face opened like a book, and Rohan began to write something down.

"Nabu, how would you like to handle Kira?"

"I'd like to take him on. Alone."

"My thoughts exactly." Rohan finished writing down exactly what he needed.

I will not leave my home for the rest of my living days. I will not attack Nabu nor Rohan Kishibe.

Closing the face page, Rohan began to leave. "He is all yours, Nabu."

"Good. Yoshikage Kira, about a week ago, you stopped by the hotel and killed my fiancée. I'll be frank, I'm filled with a lot of emotions, but I think this will tell the one I'm feeling the most. Magic-" Magic appeared by Nabu, twitching in a way that looked like a computer glitch. Kira widened his eyes in shock.

"Sic 'im."

Magic ripped the skin of its head off and let out an inhuman wail right before rushing down to Kira.

"NonononononoNONONO!"

Rohan waited outside while everyone else came to the home.

"Where's Nabu?" Okuyasu asked.

"AAAAAAAARGH! STOP! AAAAAAAAAAAH!"

"Inside." Rohan said as a severed hand went out the window, all while Kira yelled in complete agony.

"Oh..." Koichi blinked.

"Yeesh. Nabu's really pissed off, ain't he?" Josuke remarked.

"AAAAAAAAAAGH! MY FAAAAAAAACE!"

"That is an understatement." Jotaro helpfully replied.

A loud splattery sound finalized whatever Nabu was doing. The door opened to a bloodied and gore covered Nabu.

"Nabu! What the hell did you do?" Josuke recoiled.

"...I just let Magic do its thing. Time to go." Nabu flatly said.

Everyone silently ran from the scene of the crime. No one needed to know about this.

After a quick shower and a new set of clothes, Nabu sat at the table in Rohan's home. Rohan handed Nabu a coffee, which he accepted.

"How're you feeling?"

"Terrible. I can't believe I let myself get that violent!"

"I've took the liberty of looking into your world via some videos Jotaro gave me. You've killed before."

"Yeah, but not like what I did to Kira."

"I'll be frank, Nabu, I've dealt with the feelings of vengeance before. I suppose everyone has their own opinions, but I personally would prefer that Kira get what was coming to him, no matter what. You, I'm guessing, would prefer a different kind of justice."

"It's just... when I let Magic kill the guy, I felt like I should've felt something get off my shoulders. Instead, they feel heavier than ever. Layla... I'm sorry that I lost control."

Rohan sighed. "Look, just accept what had happened, and learn from it. I have learned enough from my trials as a Looper. If it's any consolation, I probably would've done the same as you if I were in your shoes. We may be Loopers, but we're also human, in a way."

Nabu sighed. "Yeah. I guess you're right. I need to take a walk."

Nabu walked around when Riven was forcibly ejected from the gym.

"And don't come back, you destructive loon!" The door slammed shut.

"Do I *want* to know?" Nabu asked.

"I got really into punching the punching bag. Punched it through the window on my first try."

"Oh my God."

"Yeah. You look like shit, Nabu. Do I *want* to know what happened?"

"No, you don't."

"So you either lost something dear to you, or you found this Kira person and went all out on him."

"In a way..."

"...You didn't."

Nabu said nothing.

"Dammit, Nabu. You're better than this."

"I know but... Layla and Kira and... I just let go and..."

"Look, maybe you should take a moment. I'm going to be leaving Morioh soon anyway, and then we can talk about this back home. For now, just relax, and figure out what you're going to do."

"Yeah... I guess."

"Good. Goodbye."

"Bye, Riven." Nabu watched at Riven walked away.

And so, Nabu's adventure through Morioh ended. The police would never connect Nabu to the death of Yoshikage Kira, and his death was assumed to be a wild animal attack. Nabu would spend the rest of the Loop contemplating his actions, and how to improve himself because of it.

The Joestar family would let Nabu leave Morioh on friendly terms. Rohan would give Nabu a preview of his next Manga in the works for the Looping community. Okuyasu and Koichi would leave little impact on Nabu, but he would remember them nonetheless.

Nabu's Stand, Magic, after many long Loops of attempting to suppress it would eventually fade away after entire Loops of non use, something Nabu was grateful for.

Nabu eventually came to terms that while this wasn't his best Loop, he nonetheless decided that to meet the Joestars was good enough to try and never forget.

Who knows, maybe they'll meet again, on less trying times.

32.2 (lord Martiya)

The Trix were cackling. Just a little prank on the Unawake Winx, one that Flora would be unable to counter. And so they had literally fished Daphne out of the Lake and lifted the Sirenix curse-not too hard, they had deciphered it eons ago, and they had more than enough power for it.

"Who-who are you? And how did you do that?" the Nymph asked them. "And-wait, you're the Trix and Awake, right?"

"DRAGONDAMMIT, WHY NOW?!" Stormy shouted as she realized Daphne had just Awakened.

"Long story short, it was really inconvenient that you Awakened right now." Icy summed up as Darcy kept their sister from shouting and

screaming even more. "Don't ask anything more, you'll find out some future Loop after it won't be inconvenient for us."

"Oh... Ok. But how did you lift the curse?"

Icy looked at the fairy. On one hand, she had no reason to tell her beyond the fact Bloom was more or less a friend now, as strange as she still found it. On the other, she had no reason NOT to, and having Daphne decursing herself would cause some interesting reactions from the Three Ancestral Witches and Politea.

"Well, you see, the curse works by..."

32.3 (Jeanne Summers)

Sitting around a large table at a restaurant, Stella clicked her chopsticks as she came up with a new round table question. "Oh! Biggest misunderstanding in a foreign loop?"

Diaspro scrunched her face up, trying to forget her biggest misunderstanding in a foreign loop.

"Oh, that's the face of a good story," Roxy teased.

"Assassination Classroom," Diaspro admitted, "I didn't know Korosensei was the Anchor, and I killed him with my Cards!" Diaspro hid her face in her hands.

"Oh no," Techna whispered, the Winx looked both horrified and gleeful, sighing, Diaspro recounted the incident.

Diaspro Awoke in the back of a run down looking classroom, loop memories floating through her mind lazily.

She was a hopeless exchange student, in from Australia with little training in the written languages of Japan. Shunted into Class E, just

waiting to be dropped from the school altogether.

She'd been daydreaming at her desk, ignoring the rowdy behaviour around her, when it began.

The yellow, tentacle-bearing creature claiming to be their teacher, and responsible for blowing a hole in the moon, stood at the front of the classroom as a very strict government type stood next to it.

Diaspro held herself back - just long enough for the government man to explain the creature could only be killed by special weapons - before she summoned Time from her pocket. Dash, Power and Sword activated next as she stole the knife the man was holding, then using Sword to wrap the knife, she shoved it through the creature where it's heart should have been.

Time and Sword cancelled themselves and let the normal temporal flow resume, exposing the creature to the blade.

The loop lasted just long enough for the yellow creature to get a good look at Diaspro's face before it crashed.

"Then I woke up in Eiken and... stuff... happened," Diaspro shrugged.

"Define 'stuff,'" Flora's eyes narrowed dangerously.

"Self mutilation and a lot of dead people," Diaspro said to her plate, shame an almost visible weight on her shoulders.

"I'm not saying what you did was okay, but to be fair, it was Eiken..."

"Still," Aisha butted in, "I can't imagine Korosensei would ever be happy to see you again."

"Um... actually..." Diaspro pulled a 'funny you should mention that' face.

The second time Diaspro Awoke in Classroom E, (with the same back story, interestingly enough) she was much better prepared, having had a hub loop since, where she was able to find the hub version of the current loop.

She'd also met a few other loopers who'd passed through the Assassination Classroom, and were happy to inform her of the loop's Anchor's identity, and that he'd been asking around about her. (During a drink at the bar, Cinderella mentioned meeting Korosensei, and sharing the time she'd met Diaspro, during the blonde's Fairy Godmothering apprentice ship.)

This time, she sank in her seat as the government man – Karasuma, if she remembered the anime correctly – begins explaining the reason Koro-sensei was being allowed to teach the class, and how to kill him.

Diaspro was so focused on going unnoticed, she didn't realise Korosensei had already noticed her until he was suddenly in front of her desk, looking a her darkly

"Sensei!" She stood so fast her chair toppled over, "I am *so* sorry about what happened last time we met, I had no idea, like at all, but I hear 'threat to the planet' and I just-" Diaspro gestured vaguely, hoping he'd understand what she was trying to say.

He continues to stare at her darkly for then more seconds, before his expression changed like flipped switch.

"Nyuk nyuk nyuk, I think I can forgive your confusion, but I will be banning the use of that magic for any further assassination attempts."

"Yes, sir, I understand," she continued to stand nervously when Korosensei showed no sign of moving. "Was, was there anything else, sir?"

"Now that we have that out of the way, how about you introduce yourself to the class, *properly* ." She could tell be the way he stressed the word, and the way he was looking at her just what he meant; letting her magic flow through her, she transformed into her Enchantix form, it really is one of the most visually impressive of her forms.

"Hello, I'm princess Diaspro from the planet of Eraklyon, I'm the Fairy of Gemlight and I'm training to be a Fairygodmother, in addition to being the Guardian Fairy of my home world. Please take care of me." She bowed, hoping she'd gotten the phrase right, as she watched through her eyelashes as the class stared back, dumbstruck.

She just knew she was going to have people asking for wishes, and regretted admitting to her latest exploration of her Fairy persona.

"So he was just fine with it?" Musa asked incredulous.

"Not entirely, making me Fairy Godmother to the entire class was his version of revenge, but he understood where I was coming from, he actually gave me an A+ on my initial Assassination."

"Wait, wait, wait," Bloom looked as though she had just realised something. "You were an *Australian* exchange student?"

"Yeah?"

"So that's where that came from!" Bloom looked like she'd just solved one of the great mysteries of the universe.

"Where... what came from?"

"'I'll ride Koala with Riven,' do you remember, it was like a hundred loops ago now, we were all headed out and we were trying to sort out the transport-"

"Oh that!" Diaspro finally realised what her friend was talking about, "yeah, that's where I picked that up, 'riding koala' just sounds way more fun than 'riding bitch.'"

Around the table, the fairies made agreeing noises.

"Alright: biggest misunderstanding in a foreign loop, who's next?"

32.4 (Awesomedude17)

"Robot sheep that can cloak themselves in a way that makes them look like real sheep." Timmy repeated.

"Yep. Real sheep just couldn't get the vocals just right." Roxy explained.

"Gee, I wonder why." Timmy put down his welding mask and began to finish up Roxy's commission.

Roxy was simply ecstatic.

"-You've got to... You've got to BEEP BEEP! I'm a sheep! I said BEEP BEEP, I'm a sheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep!"

Musa grinned as the dubstep roared out.

"Glad this little venture's over. What do you think, Bloom?" Roxy said with a smug grin.

"...WHAT!"

32.5 (Awesomedude17)

"Okay, we've noticed that you're handling a lot of Trix cereal, so what's up?" Sky sternly asked.

"Random experiment we're doing." Icy explained.

"What kind of experiment?" Timmy pressed on.

"Well, you two, we've been making something based off of something Darcy saw in the Hub, but it's incomplete so far." Stormy shrugged.

"However, beware, for what you're about to see is pretty horrifying." Darcy said.

"Try us." Timmy said.

"Very well. BEHOLD, THE TRIX HOMUNCULUS!"

A abomination of Trix Rabbits and Trix cereal 3 meters tall lurched forward, moaning in agony, and leaving behind soggy cereal with every step.

"That's not a homunculus." Sky pointed out.

"What?" Icy blinked in confusion.

"A homunculus is a small humanoid creature. That thing is at least twice as large as a regular human."

"Well do you have any better suggestions, and if you say anything about the corn flakes thing we created while we were not Awake-"

"How about the Cereal Abomination?" Timmy suggested.

"Oh, that's a good one." Sky smiled and pointed at Timmy.

"...Yeah, that sounds surprisingly cool. I'll admit it." Stormy admitted.

"UAAAAAAGH!"

"Shut it, Cereal Abomination." Darcy shouted.

"Great, I've been overturned before we could even put it to a vote." Icy groaned.

"Before we leave, is that thing dangerous?" Timmy asked.

"Define 'dangerous.'" Darcy asked.

The Cereal Abomination exploded, splattering gore, cereal, milk and various other body/cereal pieces all over the place.

"Okay, we're leaving now to take a shower, burn our clothes and try to forget this ever happened." Sky said. "Goodbye."

As the two Specialists left, Darcy checked her notes.

"That one lasted a whole three seconds longer than the last one."

"I hate everything and everyone." Icy muttered as she picked cereal and teeth off of her dress.

32.6 (Awesomedude17)

"-And so, you're now one of us, sister. How does that feel?" Icy explained.

"...Trixie is going to enjoy being so bad." Trixie grinned.

Many Loops later

Flora and Twilight downed another two vials of whatever indeterminate drink they needed to get drunk.

"Hey, Mac! Remember when we all made that list of things Loopers shouldn't do?" Twilight asked.

"Eeyup. Added it myself."

378) Trixie and the Trix should never do a sisterly outing.

"Thank you... you big red *hic*!" Flora passed out.

"Pff, lightweight." Twilight passed out too.

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32.8 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro Awoke behind the wheel of a car. Thankfully the car wasn't moving.

"Diaspro, are you alright?" The woman in the front passenger seat had lovely blue hair, and a concerned look.

… and was her girlfriend according to her loop memories.

"Just a dizzy spell, threw my for a bit of a loop, but I'm fully Awake now."

The bluenette sagged with relief, "oh thank goodness, I mean no offence but..."

"But I'm not your girlfriend, so this is awkward?" the other woman – Michiru – nodded, "you've been Awake for what, three weeks now?" Shock crossed her Michiru's face, "that's how long you've been subtly moving away from me, emotionally," Diaspro explained.

"I'm sorry, I know it must have hurt you," the woman looked at Diaspro with regret and compassion. Diaspro shook her head.

"It did hurt, but honestly, not the worst break up I've ever ha- OH MY GOSH!" Diaspro's exclamation startled Michiru. "Sorry, sorry, I've just realised which loop I'm in, this is my first time in one of the 'big seven.'"

Michiru laughed, "well then, welcome, don't worry, our Anchor is perfectly nice, I'm sure you'll get along fine."

Diaspro had been warned about Minako, but after a short conversation with her about Diaspro's love life and how it related to her well being, and how she was nowhere near ready to begin such an endeavour, Minako didn't even try to talk to her about finding someone to love.

The visiting fairy really didn't understand what everyone had been talking about.

"Excuse me, Usagi?" Diaspro looked nervous as she approached the Anchor, Usagi smiled warmly.

"Hey Diaspro, what's up?"

Diaspro fidgeted, before summoning her Space Sword, "I was just wondering: am I allowed to keep this sword after the loop ends, it's just a really nice sword." She had a hopeful look plastered across her face, holding the sword like a precious treasure, which it was.

Usagi put a hand over her mouth to stifle her giggles, Diaspro really was a cute baby looper.

Diaspro skipped through the halls of Alfea, popping her head around the door of the Winx Club's dorm rooms.

"Hey," She greeted her Anchor cheerfully, entering the room fully, "I just got back from a fused loop, I got to meet the Sailor Senshi, it was really exciting, everyone was so nice. Usagi even let me hold *The* Crystal for a minute, its power matrix is amazing."

Flora blinked, catching up to Diaspro's rapid speech, she hadn't seen the blonde this excited in a while. "I'm glad you had fun, Minako wasn't too pushy?"

"No, she was great, we had a chance to sit down and talk about the importance of self love, which was nice. OH! and Michiru was so welcoming, I looped in as her girlfriend, which was kind of awkward, but we worked it out."

Flora's smile dropped, "you met Awake Michiru?"

"Yeah, she was great," Diaspro tilted her head, "why?"

"Are you okay?" Diaspro looked confused, "last time Michiru was here..." Flora stopped to shudder, "she's one of the greatest pranksters in the multiverse!" the flower fairy exclaimed to the fairy of Gemlight, who still seemed confused by Flora's worry.

"She didn't prank me at all, she was totally nice, we worked on some really fun ways to kill the enemies of the Senshi together, and I got some great new ideas for dealing with Yoshinoya! Oh speaking of, I'm going to go enact plan 'the bumblebee and the brambles,' just thought I'd let you know I'd be out of reach for most of this loop, I kind of busted my Phone."

"I'll pass it on to Techna, she can fix it for you," Flora held her hand out for the Phone, which Diaspro gave her happily, before prancing out the door.

Flora eyed the Phone, which didn't look so much like a phone as it did plastic slag. Reaching for her own phone, Flora called Bloom.

"Hey, when we were warning Diaspro about the other loopers we'd met, you did remember to warn her about Michiru, right?"

"No, I thought you did."

"Oh dear..."

32.9 (Jeanne Summers)

"After everything you've done to my sister why the hell would I trust you?" Daphne scowled at the newcomer, but Diaspro just sighed.

"I understand, from your perspective, I've been a horrible person to your sisters for several years, my baseline self has a lot of unresolved issues, she's not a kind person. Even now I'm not all sunshine and rainbows, but as an looper, Bloom is one of my dearest friends, that's why I wanted to introduce myself now that we're both Awake at the same time.

"I am different from my baseline self, and I am sorry for what I did in baseline, what she still does." Diaspro held out a card for Daphne to take, "these are my most reliable contact numbers, I'm heading out to uninhabited space for a bit to test out some new powers I picked up, but if you want to talk, just give me a call. Even if you just want to talk to someone about how bizarre the loops are.

"You're my friend's sister, I'd like for us to get along, we're going to be here a long while."

Suspicious, Daphne took the card and watched Diaspro leave. 'I'll ask Flora about it,' she decided, pocketing the contact info.

32.10 (Jeanne Summers)

"What's she doing?" Darcy whispered to Icy, staring at Diaspro as she scowled at a small block of ice.

"And how long has she been doing whatever it is she's been doing?" Stormy added.

"She's trying to manipulate ice, apparently she can move salt and sugar, because they have crystalline structures, and she wants to see if she can manipulate ice, based on the same crystalline structure principle." Diaspro moved her hands at the ice, which did nothing in response. "She's only been at it for three hours."

"Should we go pick up some lunch, get baby sis to take a break?" Darcy asked, concerned.

"Might be a good idea," Icy agreed as Diaspro physically picked up the ice and threw it down in frustration.

Adminspace

"Is there something on my face?" Fand asked.

"What? No," Miele said. "Why?"

"You keep looking at me funny," Fand said. "I don't have something stuck in my teeth, do I?"

"No, nothing like that," Miele said, drifting across Fand's screen. "I'm just... confused."

"Confused by what? What did I do?"

"It's not something you did, it's something you didn't do," Miele said, perching her avatar on one of the desktop icons. "You ship everyone, to an unhealthy degree-"

"I thought I told you I don't want to have this conversation," Fand said, dragging her erstwhile assistant off to the edge of the secondary screen.

"Hey!" Miele protested the abrupt treatment. "I'm not talking about your lack of a love life this time! Though we really should get back to that. You're like some kind of voyeur or something. But no, that's not what I wanted to ask you about."

"What did you want talk about then?" Fand asked, glancing at Miele out of the corner of her eye.

"Diaspro," Miele said. "You haven't tried shipping her with anyone. I was curious as to why."

Fand blinked. "Because it would hurt her?" She said, mildly confused.

"Yes, I'm aware of that," Miele said. "I put words to that effect in my independent evaluation of our loopers. Speaking of which, I really should send that off to Skuld."

"Skuld's having you do independent evaluations?" Fand asked.

"Yes," Miele said. "She's not happy with you, but she can't justify assigning a second Admin to keep tabs on what happens in the loop, so she asked me to do it. Which is kind of ironic in my opinion, but there you go. Anyways, I knew shipping Diaspro was a bad idea, but I wasn't really expecting you to show that kind of restraint."

"Did you even read my shipfics?" Fand demanded. "I realize it's not the most normal hobby, but I take my shipping *seriously.* And that means knowing when it would actually hurt someone."

"But annoying them is fine?" Miele asked.

"Of course," Fand said. "That's half the fun! Crack shipping is blast! But I'm not going to hurt anyone."

"Huh," Miele said. "I'm... sorry I misjudged you, Fand."

"It's fine," Fand said, then brightened. "Wanna help me write one about Skuld and Coyote?"

"And just like that we're back to normal service," Miele muttered.

"What?"

"Nothing."

32.1: Go to bed and wake up dead. Man that's gotta suck. Welcome to the loops, Daphne.

31.3 cont.: Well, that didn't end well. Here's to better luck in the future.

32.2: ...is that a prank or a favor? Maybe both?

32.3: What's a little murder between friends?

32.4: And now *this* is back.

32.5: Let us never speak of this again.

32.6: Are the explosions over?

32.7: No comment.

32.8: Well that's moderately awkward.

32.9: And that's even more awkward.

32.10: Huh. I wonder what else she can do.

Adminspace: Good to know even Fand has some limits.

Chapter 33

33.1 (Awesomedude17)

Roxy looked up and made a face that was of pure, unrestrained joy.

"You're a Looper?!"

"Yes I am." The Tyrannosaurus Rex named Roxanne replied.

"EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!" Roxy squeed.

"Calm down, kiddo. There are more exciting Loopers than me."

"Yeah, but you're a T-Rex, with the most awesome scientific name in existence! How could I not be overjoyed?"

"...Touché."

"Soooo, what's your name?"

"Roxanne, but you can call me Roxy."

Roxy gasped. "That's my name too!"

"Really? Heh. Small multiverse."

"I can't wait to tell Bloom and Daphne about this!"

A disturbance was soon felt.

"What was that?"

"Probably Ian trying to alter the Ping again. He never succeeds."

"I wonder why?"

Daphne coughed up a puff of fire as she glared at Ian Malcolm.

"Really? How do you screw up the Ping so that it explodes and turns us in dragon-human hybrids?"

"I could've sworn infusing fairy magic with the Ping would improve the Ping."

"Well guess what, we're still half-dragon."

"Still kickass if you ask me."

"...Okay, maybe you have a point."

"Thank you."

33.2 (Awesomedude17)

Musa looked through her Pocket when she saw a strange DVD.

After coming out, she held it up to ask if anyone wanted to watch it.

BANG

"FLORA! THE FUCK, GIRL!"

"Musa, you'll thank me later because no one should see the horror that is Nut Kracker. ***EVER!*** "

"Am I missing something here?" Daphne asked.

"UGH! Nut Kracker. Flora, Stella and me had the displeasure of seeing that trash film." Bloom groaned.

"It ended up with the three of us... snapping." Stella added.

"Snapping?"

"You see..."

Johnny Cage was Awake and preparing to settle down with Sonya when all of a sudden, Flora, Stella and Bloom burst through the door.

"There he is!" Stella shouted.

"Your movie sucks!" Bloom kicked Johnny in the dick. Flora followed up with a thick root hitting the exact same spot. Finally, Stella grabbed some nunchucks that were nearby and swung them into the exact same spot.

Afterwards, Johnny just let the memories dull as the damage to his balls began to compound.

Nut Kracker was a mistake since day one, and he should've known it.

"Don't you think you overreacted, Girls?" Daphne said with wide eyes and shock.

"Daphne, you will never know the seething rage that comes from watching a movie so horrible, that not even Satan himself would show this movie as a form of torture like we have." Bloom darkly said.

"Over a movie? Yeah, forgive me for being skeptical, but it can't be that bad."

Flora sighed, took out a wand, took out a memory of a clip from the movie and showed it to Daphne. Immediately, Daphne's eye twitched.

"An hour of that!?"

"Yes." Flora confirmed.

"My God, if anything, he got off easy!"

"And that just about sums up why no one but Cosmo and Billy liked Nut Kracker."

"Who?"

"Well, the former is from a Loop where fairies watch over children and grant reasonable wishes while the other is an MLE that always needs to die horribly. They're stupid." Stella explained.

"Welcome to the Loops, Daphne. This isn't even the weirdest past event ever." Bloom warned.

33.3 (Callii)

At this point, Daphne was fairly used to Awakening back in her cave, going through the motions, contacting Bloom, sometimes getting freed early if the right people were Awake. However, she'd never woken up sitting in a horse-drawn cart and with her hands tied, going to her *execution* . She was almost grateful to the dragon when it landed and disrupted the village right before the ax actually came down, except then it had started attacking and she had to make a hasty escape or face death *again* . She'd gone to a small town, then got redirected to a bigger one, where she had to warn the Jarl— the local word for king?— about the dragon.

"Okay," she muttered to herself as she walked. "Dragon. That's— that's something. I'm guessing this one's not a force of good like the Great Dragon. It seemed… rather the opposite, actually."

She drew some stares when she reached the city— Whiterun, according to a signpost. Covered in dirt and soot from the dragon's attack, and a complete stranger to boot, she honestly couldn't blame them. "I have to see the Jarl," she explained to the guards at the gate. "I've got information about Helgen." The name came out automatically, and she wondered how she knew it. *Didn't Flora tell*

me about Loop memories? she recalled, and tried to access hers—but there wasn't anything from before she Awoke. *Well. Okay.*

Dashing up to the Jarl's palace, she stopped a moment to look at the building. It looked smaller than what she remembered of her home on Domino. Still, it was a palace, so she prepared to treat the Jarl with utmost respect.

"I… am… very ticked off… with… the Jarl," Daphne growled through gritted teeth as she shot a blast of fire at an annoyingly persistent zombie creature. "Who sees a person who just escaped an attack and went to go tell someone in charge and thinks, 'They'd be perfect to go fight zombies!'?"

The thing growled at her and swiped with its sword, and she skipped back before unleashing another gout of fire. "Go *away* !" she yelled. "*Fus!"*

A wave of some unknown magic lashed out in front of her, and the zombie stumbled backwards. Without really thinking, Daphne threw one final fire blast at it, and it fell to the ground at her feet.

As she regained her composure, she stared. "What was *that* ?"

There was *another dragon. Why was there another dragon?!*

Daphne's fire blasts really didn't seem to be doing much damage to the giant lizard. Fortunately, several city guards were alongside her, helping as best they could, and soon the dragon was dead in front of her. "Take that," she said halfheartedly, feeling less triumph than she imagined she probably should. It was just that, well, dragon fire had been the source of her power, and then it was her sister's, and it was a dragon that had created the Magic Dimension… seeing a dragon as evil was different. She didn't think she liked it.

Then, of course, because her life seemed determined to be as *interesting* as possible, the dragon's corpse burst into flames, some sort of energy rushed into her, the sky rumbled with a word she was pretty sure applied to her, and she was off to climb seven thousand steps up a mountain.

This would be so much easier if I could still fly.

"So I'm a Dragonborn? That seems... simultaneously completely accurate and also the complete opposite of me, what with the killing dragons part."

The Greybeard, Arngeir, shook his head. "You are not *a* Dragonborn. You are *the* Dragonborn. And you do not *have* to kill any dragons."

"I don't?" Daphne's brow furrowed. "I thought…"

"It is easy to fall into the trap of futility," the sage said. "Easy for Loopers, and easier here especially, to wonder why you should bother trying to fight. It will not matter in the end. But the people here… they are still people."

"That wasn't my thought process at all!" exclaimed Daphne. "It's just that I don't like to kill, and dragons have always been connected to me, and I didn't want to kill them if I didn't have to. But if it's a choice between letting a dragon live or saving the lives of many people, of course I'll choose to kill the dragon!"

Arngeir listened to her words, then nodded. "I apologize, Dovahkiin. I did not mean to insult you. And regardless, I believe you have not been Looping long enough to truly understand futility. This is your first Fused Loop, correct?"

"Yes, it is. So I'm replacing the Dragonborn… does that have anything to do with the fact that I can yell and shove people back?"

And so, Daphne's tutelage in the Way of the Voice began.

33.4 (Awesomedude17)

"Brandon, thank you for volunteering for this attempt of ours." Icy said.

"I did nothing of the-"

"Be quiet, Brandon. We're making special soda."

Brandon sighed.

"First up, this." Darcy laid out a bright blue drink.

Brandon took a swig and gagged immediately.

"Fish!?"

"I told you he'd hate it." Stormy remarked.

"Alright then." Icy opened up a door, revealing an even larger version of the Cereal Abomination. "Let him kick your ass, Brandon.

Brandon's eye twitched.

Bloom stared at the building that was burning down.

"Trix in one of their less lucid moments?"

"Yeah. I don't know what that blue drink they gave me was, but considering that they wanted to kill me, I decided that no, I don't want to know."

"UGH! Ever since we met Dr. Monty, they wanted to remake those weird drinks."

"Who?"

"You don't want to know. All I'll say is lovecraftian horrors and zombies were involved, and we had to kill a dragon too. Not fun, despite what you think."

"...Yeah, I don't want to know."

"Good. Let's get you washed up."

33.5

"Okay, whose idea was this?" Diaspro asked.

"Good question," Bloom said. "Whoever it was, I vote we have them banished."

"Just banished?"

"I've been trying to cut back on my homocidal impulses."

"Huh. I should probably consider doing that too."

"I think most of us should."

"Except for Flora."

"You'd be surprised," Bloom said. "Anyways, I would very much like to know who decided that putting your parents, Sky's parents, and all four of my parents at the same dinner table was a good idea."

"It's like they were trying to start an inter-realm incident," Diaspro said, shaking her head. "And now mom's glaring at Erendor again."

"And of course Oritel's doing the same thing," Bloom said.

"Why do you call him Oritel?" Diaspro asked. "He's your dad."

"Yeah, but he didn't raise me," Bloom said. "I still love him, but I decided a while back that Mike is Dad and Oritel is either Oritel or

Father. Same thing for Vanessa and Miriam."

"Got it," Diaspro said. "Gotta admit, I'm kind of jealous of the fact that you have four parents, all of whom are stable."

"I know," Bloom said. "Flora and Techna both had someone else stand as their parents for their wedding. It was really sweet, but kind of sad at the same time."

"I'm sorry I missed it," Diaspro said. "Any chance someone has a recording?"

"Many someones," Bloom said. "I think Asami has the best version."

"I'll have to shake her down for it at some point," Diaspro said. "I like their rings."

Bloom turned slightly red. "Aheh. Funny story about that, actually..."

"What was it?"

"They um, you, um, not you, but the non-looping you, I mean-"

"Get to the point," Diaspro commanded.

"Um. You, uh, you made them," Bloom said. "The wedding rings that is. I don't know who did the engagement rings."

"Wait," Diaspro said. "You mean *I* made Flora and Techna's rings?"

"Yes?"

"And they didn't *tell* me?"

"They don't know!" Bloom explained. "Seras and Asami were the ones who handled it, and when they came to me to ask who could make the best rings in the loop-"

"You mentioned *me* ?" Diaspro demanded. "But you hated me!"

"Not by that point," Bloom said. "I mean we weren't friends or anything, but I didn't hate you."

"Okay, but why didn't *you* tell me?"

"When and how would that have come up in conversation?" Bloom demanded.

"...I don't know! You still could have mentioned it!"

"It didn't occur to me, sorry!" Bloom said. "I can't be expected to remember everything I've done over the loops."

"You still owe me for this," Diaspro said.

"Sure," Bloom said. She glanced over at the awkward meeting of the parents. "Ten bucks on your mom snapping first."

"Really?" Diaspro asked, skeptical. "Not a chance. It's going to be Samara first."

"I'm back," Sky said, taking the seat across from Bloom.

"What took you so long?" Bloom asked.

"We were starting to think you fell in," Diaspro said.

"I just wanted to hide from all the glares your parents keep giving me," Sky said. "Bloom, your adoptive mom gives a seriously scary evil eye."

"Coward," Diaspro said.

"You haven't seen my mom's evil eye," Bloom said. "Even Icy's not immune."

"Please tell me you have pictures," Diaspro said, her own eyes gleaming.

33.6

"You're asking me for advice?" Edward Elric asked, disbelieving. He leaned against the thinly padded back of his seat. Outside the window of the train compartment, the Amestrian countryside flew past.

"I guess so," Sky said. "I've been getting a lot of advice from people in my loop and the occasional love goddess, but I guess... Well, you're here. What's your take on it?"

"I'm probably a dumb person to ask, but hey, what do I know?" the Fullmetal Alchemist and resident Anchor said. "So, my take on relationships."

"If you're willing to share, that is," Sky said.

"No, no, not an issue." Edward waved the concern aside, his automail arm clanking slightly as it moved. "You know, I used to base my life, my worldview, around the principle of equivalent exchange. It worked for Alchemy, so why wouldn't it work for everything else?"

"Does that work?"

Edward snorted. "I said used to. It doesn't. Sure, some of the basics still apply, but over all? Not a chance. The idea of equivalent exchange is that you always get out something equal in value to what you put in. Thing is, not everyone agrees on the value of things, and it's far too easy to mess up and get out less than what you put in."

"That sounds bad," Sky said.

"Depends on what you value," Edward said. "Which do you value more? Your time, or your girlfriend's time? Relationships don't work on equivalent exchange because the people involved want different things, so how valuable something is depends on who's doing the appraising."

"So... what?" Sky asked. "I see what you're saying, but I don't really get what you're trying to tell me."

"It's simple," Edward said. "Love is an exchange, but it's not an equal one. It's never equal. It might be fair, but it's not equal. If you're doing it wrong, you both end up with less than you started with. If you're doing it right, you both end up with more. But it's never equal." The Alchemist's eyes narrowed. "You said your girl started looping a long time before you did, right?"

"Uh, yes," Sky said. "A very long time."

"Right," Edward said. "And because of that, she has more to offer than you do. You'll never be able to balance the scales. There's no way to make that equal. But you don't have to make it equal. You have to make it fair. Give her what she needs from you. Everything else? That's just a bunch of pointless noise."

"So... don't be the man she wants, be the man she needs?"

"It sounds a bit weird like that, but sure," Edward said. "Flash and sparkle doesn't do you any favors in this one. Just be dependable. The rest'll sort itself out on its own."

"That sounds like what Diaspro said to me," Sky said.

"Then you should have listened to her instead of asking me," Edward said. He glanced out the window. "We'll be there soon. You should get your stuff."

"Yeah," Sky said, getting to his feet. "Thanks for the chat."

"Not a problem," Edward said as Sky left the compartment. The door closed, and Edward shook his head. "Why did he ask *me* of all people?"

33.7 (Callii)

A small leather-bound notebook floated in front of Daphne, magically-animated pen flipping through pages rapidly and making tallies in the back of the book. Daphne yawned and rested her head in her hand, feeling momentarily tempted to push the pile of essays off her desk and just give all the students passing grades. *At least magic makes it easy to multitask,* she thought, then sighed and got back to work on the essays. Some of the students were on the mark, and others were… very much not. Bloom and her friends had done reasonably well, although Stella hadn't been able to resist slipping in details about the fashions that had been popular in Magix City when it was first founded. Oh well, the essay was clear and covered the important points on the actual founding as well as the clothes.

Daphne set aside the stack of essays and sighed again. She'd always loved history— it was fascinating seeing the way events took place, how all the factors leading up to that point collided to cause major changes and vast, sweeping repercussions, and learning about the people that brought about such changes— but she hadn't really considered the grading of homework when she'd agreed to teach the class. Taking into account that and the fact that she was technically only meant to be teaching History of *Magix* , not the history of the rest of the Magic Dimension or any other dimensions, Daphne was beginning to think maybe she'd chosen the wrong career path. That, or maybe she should try to ask Faragonda for a change in her job description. At least she knew every non-Looper's essay well enough to grade from memory, since her curriculum hadn't changed since Loop 1.

A light tap on her hand made Daphne look up. The magically-animated pen had finished its work; its job done, the spell dissipated, and the pen dropped to the desk. The notebook twirled through the air theatrically, coming to a stop next to the pen as the spell keeping it in the air also dispelled. Daphne flipped to the tallies in the back of the book, feeling oddly nervous.

A simple T-chart was neatly drawn on one page, *Did* and *Did Not* as the headings. Under *Did* , she counted off 31 tallies, and 15 under

Did Not . 46 loops where she'd found an answer, and in about two thirds of those, the answer was yes.

On the opposite page was a bar chart. When Daphne tapped the largest bar, it magnified, and she could see *Controlled by witches* occurred 10 times. *Jealousy* was a close second, with nine times, and *Wanted to rule* had happened on seven occasions. Three times were listed as *Secretly hated me (not jealousy)* , and the last two were simply *Other* .

Out of 46 Loops in which Daphne had been able to ask Politea *why* , it seemed, a little over half were simply not her best friend's fault. 15 Loops where Politea hadn't betrayed her at all, and 10 where the witches forced her to stand by and leave Daphne to her fate… that was almost enough to give Daphne some hope. But as close as it was, that led her to no conclusions regarding what had happened in her own baseline.

Daphne sighed, slipped the notebook into her Pocket, and picked up another essay to grade.

33.8 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro drew the blade from the oil, and wiped it clean. Her eyes traced carefully over the patterned steel.

"Damascus or Valyrian?" a voice came from behind her.

"Valyrian," she replied, turning. "Didn't have you pegged for a blacksmith nerd, Mr Stark. Well, not enough of one to make that reference anyway."

The visiting looper shrugged as he moved further into Diaspro's workshop.

"Hey, when you live as long as we do..." he removed his glasses and pocketed them, "you pick things up."

"You're not wrong," Diaspro refocused on her blade, removing the last traces of the dousing oil. "So what can I do for you 'Iron' Man."

"I heard you're a former Dwarf *and* the Witch of Metal," Diaspro shelved the blade and turned in one smooth motion, posing against the shelves in a cheeky manner.

"Oh Mr Stark," she began, with laughter in her eyes, "are you here to talk metallurgy to me?"

Tony grinned.

Tony hissed in displeasure as Diaspro drew what should have been the blade of an arming sword from its oil bath.

"That is..."

"Not good," she completed for him, wiping away the oil. "The Vibranium B content is still way to high," Diaspro stared at the 'blade' for a few seconds longer, before snorting. Tony raised an eyebrow.

"Sorry, I was just thinking: what would happen if we replaced the steel for that Carbonadium of yours."

Tony shuddered in mock horror, before his eyes lit up and he started clicking his fingers.

"What we need is some kind of metal-ceramic non-alloy, something that acts like metal, but isn't."

Diaspro took a deep breath through her nose, and put the failed 'blade' on a bench, away from anything metal.

"I have to go smack myself upside the head."

"Why?" Tony asked.

"Because I should have thought about that like, three trials ago, I have a shield made of Quandite! I made it myself, it's really good for holding invisibility type spells!"

"Quandite?" Tony asked, confused.

"Yeah, it's one of the eighty-nine optional substances in this world." Tony just looked more confused. "There are eighty-nine substances that I've identified, that have a habit of not always existing... kind of like my ex-fiancé's cousin."

"Huh... okay, lets get some and try it out."

A coffee cup rolled slowly across the ground, making its way to a large pile of empty coffee cups in an otherwise unused corner of the workshop.

Sitting on the floor, with her head resting on her propped up hand, Diaspro breathed slowly.

On a chair, Tony lay slumped over a table.

A high pitched beeping startled the pair awake, swearing filled the air as the drowsy duo scrambled for their latest crucible.

"Vibranium B – Anti-metal Marriage Project – Trial 28: failure."

"What if we try altering something else?" Diaspro asked, frowning intensely.

"What other variables are there?"

"Carbon. We've been using dust carbon, what if we try graphite carbon instead?"

The pair stared at a black board, which was more chalk than board.

Trial 108 was marked out, as were Trials 001-107 before it.

"Urgh... you know what this means, don't you?"

It took Diaspro a second to realise she was being addressed, she turned to Tony with tired eyes.

"What does it mean, Tony?" even her voice was tired.

"You were right, we're going to have to apply a bit of magic."

Diaspro stared blankly for several seconds, before flopping onto the ground with a whimper.

"Now he agrees!"

"YES!" Tony cheered as the latest blade was drawn from the oil, and it was a blade, straight and perfectly formed. His grin disappeared as he saw the scowl on his project partner's face.

"Nooo..." he whispered to himself.

"It's brittle," Diaspro threw the blade into their anti-metal slag area, where it hit the wall and shattered.

Tony sank to his knees, he'd been so sure.

"On the bright side," Diaspro said, wiping sweat from her hairline, "I know exactly what went wrong."

When the blade from Trial 186 was drawn from the oil, Diaspro nearly sobbed.

The blade was perfect, the shape, the density, the molecular structure and even the magic which made it all possible.

Everything, working in perfect harmony.

"Is..." Tony watched Diaspro's face, waiting for it to crumple as the magical girl sensed something amiss, but the awed look never dropped from her face.

"It is," she breathed, barely daring to believe it.

The duo began laughing hysterically as the two year long, coffee fuelled endeavour finally came to an end.

Tony sauntered through the door, fresh take out in his hands, he smiled as Diaspro put the final touches on the hilt, securing the leather grip.

"Thought of a name for it yet?"

"I'm going to sleep on it for a while, otherwise I'm going to end up calling it something silly like 'Endeavour.'"

"Fair enough, now come eat, before the food goes cold... again."

"Alright," Diaspro put the finished arming sword on a clean cloth on her work table, and moved to the table where Tony was depositing the food.

"Is that alcohol?"

"I figured we deserve it."

"Oh heck yes," grinning, Diaspro stole the bottle.

33.9

(Awesomedude17)

"Remember Techna, this is a friendly sparring session. Don't go overboard."

"Flora, you don't need to remind me about every little detail. Diaspro will be fine."

"Well, at least you're good on that front."

"So, you sure about this? Techna's got a couple eons on you already."

"Bloom, I'll be fine. We both agreed to hold back just enough to not destroy anything." Diaspro reassured Bloom.

"Like each other."

"Exactly."

Techna and Diaspro approached each other, swords in hand.

"You ready for this?" Techna asked.

"If I wasn't, I wouldn't be here."

"Good." Techna looked over the other Loopers Awake, and then to Diaspro.

"On your marks." Said Sky. "Get set. GO!"

The two began to clash blades.

33.10

"So what's the most ridiculous thing you destroyed in baseline?" Nanoha asked over her drink. "In my case, it was probably the Saint's Cradle."

"You would not believe how many flying battleships I've had to take down," Pikachu said, sipping his ketchup.

"I guess the Relay network?" Shepard said, knocking back a ryncol. "It's not something I always did in baseline, but it's a possibility."

"The Turks," Alucard said, grinning. "Or maybe the Nazis. Or-"

"Or maybe your father," Luke Skywalker said, rolling his eyes. "We all know how that joke ends. I don't know why Yggdrasil decided you needed an Abridged variant. I blew up the Death Star though."

"Posers! Wimps! You all are a bunch of sissies!" Musa announced. "You want some real stories of destruction? Welcome to the Winx loops! Let's start with our trip to break Obsidian about three years into the loop. An evil place that no one should ever go they said, but we-" There was a general upsurge of protest at the youngster's intrusion, but Musa just kept going. "- *then* , no sooner had we stabilized the multiverse by replacing the Seal of Control, we-" The protest continued as the young looper effortlessly upstaged her elders and was roundly ignored.

"Musa, why were you thrown out of the bar?" Flora asked her errant looper.

"I was just telling some stories from our baseline," Musa said. "It's not my fault they took offense."

"I'm sure," Flora sighed. "Just... try to behave. I really don't like having to apologize to Alucard."

"Sorry, Flo'."

33.11 (Awesomedude17)

"Musa, deary. Green hair doesn't suit you." Darcy remarked.

"I know. I regret doing this."

"Why though?"

"Well, a while ago, I was at the Hub and found a YouTuber named Jacksepticeye."

"Oh him? I guess I know why you'd gravitate towards him. He is rather excitable."

"Yeah, and basically, I decided to dye my hair green. Next time, I'm just going to make a plushy."

"Musa, you're terrible at sewing."

"I CAN LEARN!" Musa sobbed overdramatically.

Darcy rolled her eyes. "I'll get the bike and have Stella try and fix this."

"Please do. I think this Loop I'm allergic to something in this dye. My scalp's been itching like crazy."

33.1: I meant to write this loop most of a year ago. About time those two finally met.

33.2: The movie so bad it almost caused a second Crash. No one's certain how it keeps showing up in random Loopers' Pockets.

33.3: Fairy-ro-dah?

33.4: I don't know and I don't want to.

33.5: That's got to be the most uncomfortable dinner in the history of the Magic Dimension.

33.6: More advice for Sky.

33.7: Ouch. That's a really nasty question to have hanging over you for eternity.

33.8: I vote for Verypointyrock! What?

33.9: But what did she call it? I have to *know* !

33.10: Musa... why... why do you do this?

33.11: Fun fact, in the prototype version of Winx, Magic Bloom, Musa did in fact have green hair. She also looked like a demented stage magician, which I'm glad they fixed. Flora's hair was purple in Magic Bloom. Everyone else looked about the same though.

Chapter 34

34.1 (Firehawk242, Awesomedude17)

Helia staggered as the deluge of memory hit him. All those years... He shook his head, trying to clear his sudden confusion. He would have to- no, wait- he couldn't- He sat down and looked around. He was in his room. Okay, point of familiarity established. Now what to do with his memories?

One thing was for certain. He would have to correct the mistake he made. This time, he would tell her how he felt.

"My name is Helia, I'm Saladin's-" he paused for a moment as his memories struggled to sort out whether Red Fountain's headmaster was his uncle or his grandfather.

"Nephew, we know," Riven said brusquely.

"Yes," Helia said. "I'm just here for a visit, but I've been considering transferring into the school."

"Nice to meet you, Helia," Stella said. "You've met the boys already, right?"

"In passing," Helia said. "I imagine we'll get to know each other better in time."

"Well these are the girls," Stella said. "I'm Stella, princess of Solaria. This is Bloom, she's from Domino."

"I believe I saw you on the news," Helia said, nodding to the red haired girl.

"Probably," Bloom said.

"This is Musa," Stella said. "And this is Techna."

"Pleasure to meet you," Techna said.

"And then there's our new friend Aisha," Stella said. "Princess of Andros."

"That's quite the collection of royalty," Helia said.

"Yes, well, what would you expect?" Stella asked. "And this is Flora."

"Hello," Flora said.

"A beautiful name for a beautiful flower," Helia said, taking her hand and kissing the back of it.

"Excuse me." Helia's mind reeled at the icy tone in Flora's voice. "I hardly think that was appropriate."

"Besides, she's already taken," Techna said, moving to stand next to the shorter girl.

"I... I apologize for being so forward," Helia said. "I didn't know."

"It's alright," Flora's voice had softened, losing the cold bite that had utterly baffled Helia. "Though I trust there won't be a repeat of this."

"Of course not," Helia said.

"Talk about striking out!" Riven said. "Of all the girls there, you hit on the one whose girlfriend was standing right next to her."

"I am aware," Helia said, still trying to reconcile his memories with today's events. Flora and Techna? Impossible. Techna was with Timmy, and Flora was... well, aloof would be the wrong word, but certainly reserved. She'd never used that tone of voice before either. Was he wrong about the situation? Were his memories wrong? What had changed?

"Well, see you around campus," Riven said. "Assuming Flora hasn't scared you off."

Helia shook his head. No, this was wrong. All wrong. Something had happened to warp the timeline, and he was the only one who had noticed. It was up to him to set things right.

"Helia was a lot more forward this time around than usual," Bloom commented as they lounged around the room Bloom shared with Musa.

"It happens," Flora said, sitting against Musa's bed. "Fortunately he usually gives up after getting turned down that sharply."

"Usually?" Techna asked, fiddling with Flora's hair from her place on the bed.

"There are exceptions," Flora said. "Fortunately they're rare." She shuddered. "Those loops can turn very bad very quickly."

"It's alright, I've got you," Techna said, pulling Flora up into her lap for a cuddle.

"Why did you stop dating him in the first place?" Musa asked, leaning back in a swivel chair. "From what you've said you stopped dating him before you picked up with Techna."

"Part of that was the loops," Flora said. "Same reason Techna gave up on Timmy, really."

"Dating someone who doesn't grow and learn the way you do..." Techna shook her head. "It's depressing at best."

"I never had a problem with my Schnookums," Stella commented from the rug she was flopped across.

"That's because Brandon's... Brandon," Musa said. "I'm not even sure he's real."

"Musa!" Stella said, affronted.

"All I'm saying is that he's just so relaxed," Musa said. "He's even worse than Nabu."

"You're not planning on stealing Stella's boyfriend?" Aisha asked as she leaned over the back of a chair.

"Heck no," Musa said. "He's way too tame for me."

"What was the other reason you stopped dating Helia?" Bloom asked, lying back on her bed.

"I don't know how to explain this," Flora said. "It was a long time ago, and, well... Okay. You know how Helia and I have a lot in common?"

"While you and Tech have almost nothing in common," Musa said. "Your point?"

"We have too much in common," Flora said. "It's a lot like dating myself. There's nothing... interesting about it."

"We know people who not only would but have dated themselves," Techna pointed out. "I get your point though."

"Same problem with Timmy?" Stella asked.

"A little," Techna said. "Being with him never really challenged me in any way. I never really left my comfort zone. Flynn, on the other hand, kept dragging me out to picnics and the like." She bent down and kissed the tip of Flora's ear. "I didn't realize how much I liked those things until we weren't together. I don't think I'd have grown into the person I am if I'd stayed with Timmy."

"We've all changed a lot over the loops," Flora said, leaning back against her wife. "I'm not sure I'd recognize the confused girl who

started looping all those eons ago."

"So what should we do about Helia?" Aisha asked.

"Probably nothing," Flora said. "I haven't seen anything to indicate this is one of the bad loops, but I'll keep an eye out just in case." She paused and let out a jaw-popping yawn. "Time for bed, I think."

"Good night, girls," Bloom said, then grinned. "Now get out of my room."

"Hey, it's my room too," Musa said.

"Please," Bloom said. "I'm the only permanent resident of this room. You and Flora have a timeshare on the other half."

"I suppose that's one way to describe it," Techna said. "Come on, Flora. Let's go to bed."

Flora stirred awake as something moved in the darkness of the room. She blinked the sleep from her eyes and peered into the shadowed room. She shrugged, then lay back down, nestling into Techna's embrace.

There it was again. A faint scuffing sound. She would have missed it if it wasn't for her her vampiric abilities. Again. Again.

"Sorry, sweetie," Flora muttered into Techna's shoulder. She rolled over and held up her hand. "Summer Sun," she muttered, her hand lighting up bright enough to cast the whole room in light. Just in time to see a flick of blue fabric slip out the window they'd left open for the warm weather.

"Mmmm, Flora, what are you doing?" Techna groaned, her eyes still closed.

"Go back to sleep," Flora said. "I'll only be a minute." She dimmed the light of her hand to a pale glow and got up. Hum. Figure out what the intruder was after, or catch them now? Flora sighed, letting the light fade as she shifted deeper into her vampiric side. The scent of the intruder suddenly stood out like a beacon to Flora's supernatural senses. It was a human, her natural prey. He would not be hard to find.

Flora melted into shadow and slipped through the darkness. Seras preferred to use the shapeshifting powers of their line for battle, but Flora much preferred the way they let her move quietly and swiftly through the night. Not surprising, given how much bolder Seras was than her. The intruder was good. An experienced spy. Not good enough to evade a True Vampire though.

She coalesced from a puddle of shadow directly in front of him. "Helia," Flora said with a sigh.

Helia, for his part, was staring at the fairy in horror. "What have you done with Flora?" he demanded.

"I am Flora. What were you doing in our room?"

"No you're not," Helia said. "Flora doesn't... she doesn't do that! Her eyes aren't red! And your teeth! What have you done with her?"

Flora sighed again. "It is entirely too late at night for this kind of silliness. I am Flora. Explain why you were in our room, and I'll explain what's going on."

"I don't trust you," Helia said.

"I don't care," Flora said. "If I have to, I'll get Darcy to read your mind. I'd rather not disturb her at this time of night though, so why don't you explain what you think you're doing."

"Fine," Helia said. "I think someone has meddled with the timeline. I'm the only one who's noticed, and I need to fix it."

Helia was prepared for disbelief, even laughter. He was not prepared for Flora to laugh so hard she fell over.

"I'm serious," he said.

"Oh, I know you are," Flora said, brushing away a tear. "And here I was worried this was one of the stalker versions of you. No, you've just started looping!"

"Looping?"

"Ask Brandon, he's Awake this loop," Flora said. "Just do it in the morning. Oh and Helia."

"Yes?" Helia asked.

"I don't think we would have worked. Not in the long run. I'm sorry." With that she melted back into shadow and flowed away, leaving behind the man she'd once thought of as her true love.

"So that's it. Something happened to... what was it called?"

"Yggdrasil." Brandon clarified.

"Right, and now this happens?"

"Correct."

Helia sighed.

"If you think you have it bad, wait until Riven's Looping. I think he's the only one who hasn't Awakened yet."

"Wait, why would Riven have it worse than me?"

"Both of his exes are dating, and they're gone to second base in loud ways."

Helia stared with shock at Brandon's causal explanation of sex between Musa and...

"Wait, remind me. Who was Riven's ex besides Musa?"

"Darcy. The witch."

Helia choked on his drink in shock.

"Yes, I know. Heck, Nabu once told me Riven's reaction for when he told him that one Loop where he was in this town called Morioh. Speaking of which, I guess I'll have to explain everything major that happened to all of us, starting with the fact that Flora's now a fairy-slash-vampire-slash-Chaos Goddess-slash-Grey Jedi-slash-"

"I don't know what half of those things are."

"It'll take a while." Brandon admitted, taking out some snacks and drinks from his Pocket.

34.2 (Callii)

"Daphne?"

"Huh? Oh, Bloom, hello!" Daphne exclaimed, jumping to her feet and wobbling a little as dizziness hit her. "Did you need something?"

Bloom shook her head. "Actually, I was hoping we could maybe get some lunch! We could go to Magix City, they have this pizza place that does it almost like the one at home."

"Oh! I, well, I'd love to, but I have all these papers to grade…"

"You've graded the same papers about 70 times at this point," Bloom said drily, though she was smiling. "At this point I just keep a regenerating copy of each of my assignments in my Pocket."

"I think that counts as academic dishonesty," said Daphne, falsely stern. "I could give you a detention!"

"You *could* do that, *or* you could go for pizza with me!" her sister giggled.

Daphne maintained the stern facade for another few seconds, then gave in and laughed. "All right, all right, if you insist."

Over a (frankly very delicious) slice of cheese pizza, Daphne studied her little sister. When she'd seen Bloom for the first time after waking up in the Loops, she'd been struck by how young and innocent she looked— not hardened by the world at all, still just a teenager with a lot of heart and not a lot of experience. Now, with the Looping version of her sister, Daphne thought the opposite. This Bloom had clearly seen a lot in her time in the Loops. Sure, her body still looked as young as ever, but all it took was one look into her eyes for Daphne to understand just how much older her little sister was.

She's gone so far beyond me , Daphne thought, feeling some mix of emotions she couldn't quite identify. *I'm never going to be the older sister she can look up to. Not anymore.*

She blinked, and her gaze focused on Bloom, who looked slightly worried. "You okay, Daphne?"

"Yes, yes, I'm alright," Daphne replied, giving a small smile that she tried to pretend wasn't forced. "Just a little tired."

"I get why you would be," said Bloom sympathetically.

Sighing, Daphne took another bite of her pizza. "It's—" She blushed, chewed and swallowed, and started over. "It's just papers, mostly."

Bloom looked into her eyes with that too-old gaze. "Yeah," she said. "I'm sure you're having problems grading all those new assignments. Really, I'm kind of surprised you haven't started keeping graded

copies in *your* Pocket. But then, I guess grading them distracts you from thinking about whatever you're trying to avoid thinking about."

"I—" Daphne blinked, surprised at the insight in spite of herself, then sighed again. She was really doing that a lot these days. "Yes, it's… it's a welcome distraction."

"Yeah." Bloom leaned back in her chair and ate some of her own pizza, obviously considering her next words carefully. "So this whole… Sky thing… that's been happening."

Daphne's eyes widened. "Oh! It— that's— are you okay? We've been talking about me, but you've been dealing with Sky, and—"

"No, no, that's not what I meant," said Bloom, holding up a hand. "I'm just trying to give an example, I guess. The point I'm trying to make here is, I know what it's like to miss someone. To feel like you're leaving them behind, because you're looping and they're not. And then, if or when they do start, to feel like things have changed too much for you to go back to anything like the way things were." Bloom's face fell, but she recovered so quickly that Daphne almost doubted she had seen anything at all.

Nodding, Daphne smiled faintly at her little *(older)* sister. "You've gotten so mature. I'm…" *confused glad unsure jealous wistful sad* "...proud of you." Yes. That was one of the emotions she was feeling, although some of the others scared her a little. Deciding not to dwell on that right now, she took another bite of pizza.

Bloom grinned. "Thank you, Daphne," she said warmly. "I bet that if you spend some time this Loop with him, you'll get Thoren looping in no time."

With that, Bloom changed the subject, leaving Daphne frozen in shock, slice of pizza still in her mouth. *Thoren?*

By the Dragon, *she hadn't thought of him at all.*

34.3 (Jeanne Summers)

Stella was pinning the hem of her latest dress, when a voice came from her doorway.

"Is it hot in here, or is it just you?" The line was cheesy, delivered with tone of amusement, like the speaker wanted to laugh at their own absurdity, the voice was also *very* familiar.

"Brandon!" Stella had enough presence of mind to check herself for pins *before* she jumped at her boyfriend. "Oh snookums, I missed you."

"I missed you too honey," Brandon readjusted his grip on her, and pulled a bouquet of flowers from his Pocket. "These are for you."

"Awww, they smell so nice, what's the occasion?" for a second, Stella worried she'd forgotten an anniversary, the pair had several.

Brandon shrugged, "we had to detour on the way back to Magix, and I saw a flower store, and I realised it's been a while since I bought you flowers. So, I bought you flowers."

"Thank you," Stella kissed him thoroughly, when she came up for air her eyes were dancing with excitement. "You know what else we haven't done in a while?"

With their tent set up behind them, snuggled tightly together in a fuzzy blanket, Stella and Brandon watched a meteor show streak over head, from their place on a picnic rug in the middle of a dessert on a quiet, out of the way planet with no name.

"This is nice," Brandon whispered, giving Stella a small squeeze.

"Mmmm, it feels like we've just been going on dinner dates to the city lately, I thought this might be a good change of pace," she murmured back.

"And you were right... we really should do this type of thing more often."

Above them, lost pieces of rock flew through the atmosphere at high speeds, the unique mix of minerals in the stone, and the rare blend of elements in the atmosphere, creating ribbons of dancing rainbow light.

34.4 (Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro sighed as Timmy walked away, the last of the Awake loopers had turned her down. Her eyes wandered across the training yards as she tried to decide what to do, her gaze caught on a familiar figure.

"Riven!" The boy froze, mid-swing, before turning slowly. Grinning, Diaspro hurried over to him. "Riven," he blanched as she said is name again, though this time in an inviting tone.

"What do you want Diaspro?" He already sounded resigned, good, he was half way to giving in.

"I want you to come with me to a class on Earth," Riven turned off his sword, and gave her a 'go on' gesture. "It's for glass blowing, I've already asked everyone else and they all turned me down-"

Riven flinched and scowled.

"-and that's not how I meant it, and you know it, you are simply the least likely to want to socialise with me, or I would have asked you sooner."

The specialist took a deep breath, and let it go, nodding in agreement. He really wasn't a social butterfly, and the duo weren't the type of close that would put him high on her list of possible partners.

"...glass blowing?" he changed the subject.

"Yeah, it's held at one of my blacksmithing workshops, I saw the flyer last week and I thought 'that sounds like fun,' if nothing else it would be interesting to see how it's done."

"Why take one of us, and not someone from your smithing class?"

"No one else was interested," Diaspro said with a shrug. "Now, are you too busy for me as well, or not?"

Riven sighed, rolling his neck to release some tension in his shoulders.

"Have I got time to shower, and put on something Earth Appropriate?"

"Yes! Although," Diaspro pulled the flyer from her pocket and handed it over, "there is a dress code for safety reasons."

Riven plucked the flyer from her hand, and read it over. "Alright, I'll meet you by dormitories when I'm ready."

"Thank you!"

Sighing again, Riven rolled his eyes as he turned away. Really, some days it just wasn't worth it to argue with a fairy.

34.5 (Awesomedude17)

"Your want for vengeance over that taco truck incident has been given, Roxy. Please stop with the emus." Flora said as she dodged the angry emus attacking her.

"Noted, and accepted." Roxy waived the emus away and smiled. "I so can't believe that you and a Bren weren't enough to take down a few dozen emus."

"Excuse me for not wanting to kill animals unless we need to do so so that they don't starve."

Roxy snickered. "Come. Let's get some frozen yogurt. My treat after proving that I'm better than you with animals."

"I never argued against that, but sure. Whatever you say."

"AUUUUGH! HALP!" Diaspro shouted from below the pile of emus on top of her.

"But first, let's help the collateral damage."

Roxy giggled.

34.6 (Awesomedude17)

Diaspro finished the last of her dusting, and smiled, right before exiting the room she was in.

"Alright girls, my Pocket is ready for guests. Come on in."

The full cast walked in, one by one, into Diaspro's pocket, where they saw a few noteworthy things.

A finely arranged living room was set up in the middle, with several rooms adjacent via hallways, all marked with various plaques.

"This place is almost as organized as my own." Flora remarked.

"I know. I'd rather not get lost here in case I need time to myself." Diaspro said half-jokingly.

"Gemology branch, smithing room, weapons display, photos and videos, kitchen, greenhouse, miscellaneous, there's quite a bit of organization here." Techna noted.

"Perhaps too much?" Musa coyly said.

"Musa, your Pocket is messier than a pigpen, and that's putting it nicely." Stella dryly remarked.

"I must admit, this place is quite expansive." Nabu noted.

"I've managed to get enough space for the place a couple dozen Loops ago. Come on, I'll show you the gemology branch." Diaspro beckoned the Loopers to follow her.

As Diaspro walked the others in, they were met with various crystals and gems of all kinds.

It was rather fitting for the Fairy of the Gemlight.

"Impressive." Aisha smiled.

"I see you've arranged a few by birthstones there." Daphne noticed.

"Yeah, I know. Garnet, Amethyst, Aquamarine and Bloodstone, Diamond, Emerald, Alexandrite and Moonstone (don't say anything about pearls, Stormy), Ruby, Peridot, Sapphire, Tourmaline and Opal, Topaz and Citrine, and Tanzanite, Zircon and Turquoise."

"That's a lot to remember." Icy noted.

"We've had time to know these things."

"I see."

"Anyway, right now, this one I use for when I'm feeling down."

"Huh. What is it?" Sky asked.

"Black Onyx."

"I suppose you've gotten degrees." Timmy folded his arms.

"By the doorway."

As Diaspro said, there were several dozen degrees in gemology and geology by the doorway.

"Huh, well I'll be damned. That's more than I got." Flora noted with a hint of jealousy.

"So... who wants to see my sword collection?" Diaspro grinned as she clapped her hands together.

"Holy crap!" Was the Trix' reactions to the massive room full of stands filled with swords.

"I must admit, your collection is more comprehensive than my own." Techna said.

"Well, you are a casual collector, while I'm a more hardcore collector." Diaspro casually said.

"Colichemarde? What? This is a weird sword." Brandon pointed at the blade.

"It's meant for deflecting sabres. As far a shortswords go, this is certainly one of the more practical ones."

"Well, no surprise that katanas are in here." Roxy shrugged. "Still, what's with the big one with the big handle?"

"The nagamaki is basically the horse killer blade. I barely use that blade for anything other than intimidating anyone who tries anything funny with me."

"Remind me to never make my ex angry." Sky muttered to Brandon.

"Gotcha."

"Anywho, here's my crown jewel, so to speak." Diaspro showed off the lone arming sword on a stand. "Forged this with Tony Stark, magic, Vibranium B and Quandite."

Nabu let out an impressed whistle.

"I know. I'm still having trouble naming it."

"I vote Verypointyrock." Darcy jokingly yelled.

"Aha... no."

"Well, I suppose you're going to take your time with this. Have you tried this yet?" Timmy asked.

"On the dummies, yes. Live testing though... haven't found an opportunity."

"Well, let's hope this keeps its edge." Stella said.

"Believe me, it will. So, who's hungry? I learned how to make some awesome sushi from Sunset Shimmer a while back."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

34.7 (Callii)

A lot of Loops had dragons.

Rationally, Daphne knew that not every universe would have the same dragons, but still, she was used to certain characteristics being consistent. Mastery of at least one element. Wings (though, to be fair, that was usually only in Western-influenced universes). Massive size and the respect and/or fear of all that see them.

This Loop clearly didn't get the memo.

"What, you're not even going to do the shadows-and-fire thing?" the Chinese girl (who was currently disguised as a man) in front of her said, laughing. "Some ancestral dragon guide *you* are."

Daphne snorted, a tiny flame appearing. "You've been through this enough that you probably don't *need* a guide at this point," she pointed out.

Mulan shrugged. "The company is nice. And you never know, the Huns could have been replaced by… who's the villain in your Loop?"

Taking a moment to imagine the Chinese army trying to fight off any of the Winx villains, Daphne shuddered. "I very much hope not." She blew another puff of flame and flicked her green-scaled tail. "Should we start moving?"

Mulan's horse whinnied and took a step forward, one large hoof landing a few hairlengths away from the aforementioned tail. " *Oops* ," he said, not sounding particularly sorry.

Daphne gave a rather unprincessly grumble. "Dishonor on you, dishonor on your cow…"

In a dark underwater cave within Lake Roccaluce, Mushu looked around. "Stuck down here with no way out," he muttered to himself. "This Loop *sucks* ."

34.8 (lord Martiya)

Icy Awakened in a rather comfortable bed. At first it wasn't bad, then the Loop memories hit her.

"I've replaced an idiot…" she whispered. "And I feel like-singing?"

Remembering the warnings from those who had already passed from there, Icy let the song go on while she thought at the situation, both positives and negatives.

On the positives she was about to be crowned absolute queen of a small but very rich kingdom, had new ice powers that, while inferior

in raw power to her current ones, had characteristics similar to the Dragon's Flame, and the imagine spot of how the fairies would have reacted to her with those powers in the old times was rather funny.

On the negatives she had been cooped in the castle for years, had replaced an idiot who somehow misinterpreted the troll's advice and decided to try and suppress those powers and thought that staying away from everyone she loved was a good idea, and had a rather hyperactive little sister/heir to the throne that, having been cooped inside the castle but away from her, was both extremely unexperienced of the world and likely to hold some grudge.

She was the responsible sister, just how Darcy usually was… And she just realized why her sister could be so cranky at times. Better find the Anchor, and soon.

The crowning ceremony had been nice. A bit formal, but she was now an "undoubted queen". It came with a "protector of the dominion" bit, but she didn't mind: she liked her own things, and her pride demanded nothing less than her best.

The party too was going well. She had been connecting with her Loop's sister Anna, had taken a measure of the Duke of Weselton, most likely opponent this Loop, and she knew she could deal with him easily even without the powers, and the food was good.

And then Anna dropped the bomb: she wanted to marry a guy she had just met. The fact it was a prince only made it smell worse. Something was rotten in the Southern Isle.

"Anna, you can't marry someone you've just met." she tried to explain.

"You can, if it's true love."

That would have been hard to reply, if it hadn't been for a few talks with Diaspro.

"Anna, that's not the problem. The fact you're royalty and the heir to the throne is."

"Uh?"

Icy made a mental note to strangle whoever she had replaced at the first chance. That, and arrange a good pneumonia to Anna's teacher for not explaining her the relevant bit. If nothing else the Duke was looking at them-and, judging by his reaction, could read lips. She could use the greed of one problem to deal with the unforgivability of the other.

"I am the queen of Arendelle, and you, as my sister, are first in the line of succession until I have a child. And, being the queen, I won't have the chance to marry for love. It will have to be a diplomatic match, carefully chosen to preserve our kingdom-and, as my sister, you would be expected the same. Let me finish. You would be expected the same, I said, but as you're the little sister I have a bit of leeway. I can't let you marry him now-but I can allow him to court you, and make sure it's the one meaningful match."

Thankfully that was acceptable to Anna. Who Icy was pretty sure wouldn't take long before she realized that Hans should have known, she was naive, not stupid.

As for the Duke, she knew he would help her ruin Hans: the Duke wanted Arendelle's riches, or at the very least an increase of the trade, and whatever Hans was trying with that stunt was bound to be a danger for his plans or, if exposed, a boon.

"And now you know: your sister may be stupid, but loves you." Icy told Anna after revealing her the ice powers and why exactly she had kept away. It had not been difficult being self-deprecative, after all it was the one who she replaced, and not herself, who had missed the obvious.

And, as expected, Anna had hugged her crying. As NOT expected, after a while she asked confirmation on not planning to tell Hans.

"There's something strange with him." she admitted. Earlier than Icy expected. "I mean, he should have known about the problems with our wedding… You were trying to warn me, weren't you?"

"Anna, before anything else I am your elder sister. The world will freeze before I allow anyone to hurt you again."

It took only ten seconds to Icy to understand why Anna didn't take the statement well.

"My my my… You are rather inexperienced, prince Hans. Gifted, but inexperienced." the Duke of Weselton told Hans after tricking him into admitting he was after Arendelle's throne. "People wiser and more experienced would have already understood that princess Anna is to be admired from afar lest the queen's wrath is turned upon them, and they should instead curry her majesty's favor and take what she gifts them."

"You should keep the secret, Weasel Town." Hans replied. "Who do you think they'd believe? You, whose greed is well known, or the charming, innocent suitor to the princess?"

"You, of course." the Duke answered, without rising to the provocation.

Instead he lifted the courtain near him, revealing queen Icy, Anna, and a dozen guards.

"As I said, you are too inexperienced. Or you'd know it's Weselton… And that you just provoked two furies worse than a hundred witches: a-"

Weselton couldn't gloat anymore. After all, it didn't make any sense while his preferred audience was sleeping, courtesy of Anna's

surprisingly strong right hook.

"Arendelle is in your debt, Duke." Icy said. "I am sure we'll be able to show our gratitude, once we've seen that this insulter to anything royals and nobility stand for is sent back wence he came for his brothers to punish-and fed his horse during the voyage."

Weselton and queen Icy understood perfectly each others' message: Weselton didn't want to take any risk, just increase their commercial exchanges, and Icy was more than willing to do so, and make him wish he died if he tried anything, especially toward her sister.

"You know what, Anchorman? Now I get why most monarchies aren't absolute." Icy said to Kristoff during a rare pause. "This is hell! Overwork, almost no fun, not a chance to get dirty… It's horrible!"

"I thought most villains would enjoy supreme power." Kristoff teased her.

"Not if they have any pride. Only good thing is that now I get why Darcy is always so cranky! I mean, Stormy and I always go doing what we want, and-Oh. Oh, dammit."

"Any problem?"

"Darcy's holding a grudge about Tritannus. A rather vile guy from our Branch, got me to choose him over my sisters in the baseline… And she's not over it, at all. I-I think I should… Is there an easier way to say "say sorry?""

Kristoff slapped his forehead.

"Oh, and given I have no idea when the Loop ends and you just said you're usually with Anna, a little warning: she's been my sister for this Loop, treat her well or, Anchor or not Anchor, what I'll do you will make DIO Brando tell me off for getting overboard, and that's only if I

have to do it alone." she threatened him. "Because if my sisters decide to join in, he'll be too scared to dare."

34.9

"You didn't have to come with me, you know," Diaspro said.

"And you probably don't have to go in the first place," Bloom said, glancing to either side of the intersection before tapping the gas. The car started forwards again.

"Probably not," Diaspro said, looking at the storefronts passing by. "Still, I like to talk with a professional once in a while, just to be sure I'm not backsliding."

"Have you tried the ponies?" Bloom asked. "Left, right?"

"Yes, left," Diaspro said. "I've considered the ponies, but nothing ever really came of it. I don't really know why, I just never felt like they were the answer."

"Alright then," Bloom said, taking the turn. "Right next?"

"Yeah, we're almost there." Diaspro frowned. "How do you know how to get there?"

Bloom pursed her lips for a moment. "Your appointment is with Doctor Silverman, right?"

"Yes," Diaspro said. "How do you know where we're going?"

Bloom pulled the car into the psychology office's parking lot and parked. "You should hurry up. Don't want to keep the doctor waiting."

"I was planning on walking until you gave me a ride," Diaspro said. "I've got time before my appointment. Seriously, Bloom, why do you know where this office is?"

Bloom let out a sigh. "Because I went here in baseline."

"What?" Diaspro asked, shocked.

"Not always," Bloom said. "It depends on the version of baseline we're in whether or not I went here, and even then, sometimes Silverman's just a general practitioner."

"But sometimes he's not," Diaspro said. "You never told me."

"I never told anyone," Bloom said. "Stella's the only one who has any idea, and even she really only suspects. She's never asked me, and I've never told her."

"Why?" Diaspro asked.

"A lot of reasons," Bloom said. "I'm a fairy who was raised by humans. Part of me always knew I was different, that I didn't fit in. I was adopted, and sometimes that really confused baseline me. And then there's Mitzy."

"She was that bad?" Diaspro asked.

"Sometimes," Bloom said. "It's more what she represents than anything else. Before Alfea, I... well, I didn't exactly have friends. Now that baseline's expanded it's gotten a little better. Sometimes Andy exists, though we did break up before I went to Alfea. Oh, and Selina sometimes exists. Even so, that's not exactly the most active social life."

"Oh," Diaspro said, stunned. "I... I didn't know."

"It's alright." Bloom smiled. "I have plenty of friends now. It's not a big deal."

"Still, that's got to hurt," Diaspro said.

"I got better," Bloom said.

There was a long moment of silence.

"Hey... Bloom," Diaspro said.

"Yes?"

"Do you want to come with me?" Diaspro asked. "You know, for moral support?"

"Are you sure?" Bloom asked. "It won't make you uncomfortable?"

"I'm sure," Diaspro said. "I'd like it if you came with me."

"Alright then," Bloom said, turning off the car. "Let's go."

34.10

Helia's face pulled into a pained expression as he observed the Alfea end-of-year ball. It was wrong. It was all wrong.

Bloom and Sky sat together, chatting. Good, but they were so frustratingly cautious with each other. They were supposed to be head over heels in love. It was wrong. All wrong.

Aisha was dancing with Nabu. Wrong. Wrong! Helia liked Nabu, but nothing good ever came of cheating fate. The man was supposed to be dead.

Diaspro, Roxy, and the Trix were chattering back and forth about something, and he couldn't even begin to describe just how wrong that was. The Trix were the villains, Diaspro was deranged, and Roxy should still be on Earth!

Daphne stood off to the side, speaking with Cordatorta. She should still be at the bottom of the lake. This was wrong. So very wrong.

Musa was DJing, and that was as it should be, but Riven wasn't where he was supposed to be, doing his not-quite protective

hovering thing. No, he was sitting by some witch Helia couldn't identify. This too was wrong. Unbearably wrong.

Timmy was speaking with Brandon and Stella. At last, a point of relief. Brandon and Stella we're still as they should be. Then Stella tapped a watch she'd pulled from somewhere and suddenly it wasn't Stella sitting there but some sort of bizarre creature. Helia looked away quickly, before the sheer *wrongness* of the situation got to him any more than it already had.

In his haste to look away from Stella's willing transformation, his eyes wandered over the greatest source of his discomfort.

Flora and Techna sat on the grass together, their fingers interlaced as they watched the goings-on. That was *wrong.* Everything was wrong. The world was wrong, like he'd been suddenly dropped into a twisted reflection of his home. It had all the right pieces, but they weren't in the right places. It was disturbing, unnatural, *wrong* . Nothing fit the way it should.

Helia shuddered.

Flora lay her head on Techna's shoulder. "It's nice when everyone's Awake at the same time," she murmured.

"There are so many of us now," Techna said. "I remember how happy you were when I started looping."

"I was lonely," Flora said. "It's hard being alone."

"You're not alone now," Techna said, glancing around. "There's what, eighteen of us these days?"

"Not quite," Flora said. "Only seventeen."

"Still a big change from when it was just the two of us," Techna said. "Any regrets?"

"A few," Flora said. "But nothing I would change. You?"

"I'd like to go back and smack my younger self for dragging her heels so much on us," Techna said with a laugh.

"Please don't," Flora said. "She got there in the end, and I like how we turned out."

"Alright, if you say so," Techna said. "It is nice to see everyone having fun together."

"Yeah," Flora said vaguely.

"Flora? What's wrong?" Techna asked.

"Helia looks troubled by something."

Techna looked over at the specialist in question. "Hopefully it's nothing," she said. "If it really is a problem, we'll find out eventually."

"I know," Flora said. "I just wish I knew what was on his mind."

The world was wrong. It had gone wrong, so terribly wrong, Helia thought.

So be it. He would put it right.

34.1: And now Helia is looping. Not sure what else to say here.

34.2: Thaaat's awkward. Though to be fair, I forget about Thoren on a regular basis too. Wait, who were we talking about again?

34.3: Adorkable: Adjective. This.

34.4: I'm pretty sure that's most days, Riven.

34.5: I'm told this is a reference to the time Australia declared war on Emus and lost. I'm not sure if that's funny or just sad.

34.6: But does she have a flamberge?

34.7: Dishonor on you, dishonor on your cow, dishonor on your loop...

34.8: And this is why for most villains it's really about the journey and not the destination. ...darnit, now I want to go watch Megamind again.

34.9: Oh. Um. Yeah. In other news, I am really liking the Bloom/Diaspro... what do you call a bromance when both members are female? Dunno. Either way, I like it.

34.10: Well, crap.

Chapter 35

35.1

Helia sat at the desk in his room at Red Fountain. He had a lot of work ahead of him if he wanted to return the world to the way it should be. He opened his sketch pad to a fresh page and divided it into three sections.

As he saw it, there were three major categories of... shifts, for lack of a better word, in the way the world was. The first category was items from other "loops". He wrote the word ITEMS at the top of the left hand section, then underlined it. Beneath it, he started listing the things he knew of that had been brought in from outside. He quickly gave up, realizing it was a futile task. He had no way of knowing what the various other loopers' pockets contained. Their contents would need to be destroyed. That was going to be tricky.

Since only a looper could access their own pocket, he'd need to trick the others into pocketing something that would destroy everything inside said pockets. He'd have to look into various destructive artifacts later. His gaze shifted to the middle section. This section was titled ABILITIES.

The majority of the loopers had abilities they weren't supposed to have. Eliminating those... might actually be easier than dealing with the pockets, now that he thought about it. The Trix had semi-successfully stolen Bloom's powers, Valtor had stolen the magic of entire realms, the Winx had temporarily lost their powers when something happened to the Tree of Life, Tritannus had successfully stolen Daphne's powers, and the Legendarium straight up destroyed powers. There were plenty of options there, assuming they worked as advertised. For the non-magical abilities he'd have to get creative. Perhaps the water of the Black Willow could be used to create some sort of memory erasing potion, or he could use a modified version of

the age-regression curse. He'd probably have to learn magic to do it, but he had time.

He nodded, satisfied, and moved onto the final section. He stared at the page for a long moment, unable to come up with a suitable title. There was no one word to sum up the third category, which encompassed the most disturbing changes. The Trix should be villains. Diaspro and Bloom should hate each other. Stella should be far too vain to ever consider transforming herself into something else. Musa and Riven should be arguing. Flora and Techna should not be married.

Helia had no good solution for this. Maybe the Black Willow's water again? Maybe? It was a bad solution. Unworkable. There had to be a better solution. If only he could just convince them to abandon this sham and go back to the way things should be. That would be perfect. Then everything would be fine, and he wouldn't have to sit here planning how to betray every single one of his friends.

Helia shuddered and closed his sketchbook. Distasteful as he found it, he had to go through with his plan if the world was ever going to be set right. He'd find a solution for the third category eventually.

He hoped.

35.2 (Awesomedude17)

Helia walked through the Wildlands, thinking about everything that changed. Everything completely different.

His mind was repulsed by everything different, especially Flora and Techna.

It was wrong.

ROAAAAAAAAAAR

Helia wisely ran in the opposite direction of the roar, only to stop himself when he saw Timmy and Brandon run towards it. Thinking it'd be a good chance to spy on them, he kept close enough to observe, but far enough to not be noticed.

Eventually he found the duo looking over a headless corpse of a massive dinosaur.

"Well, looks like he's here." Timmy noted.

"Better let him have his fun. I do not want to be like this thing." Brandon replied.

"My skull as a trophy? No thanks, I've seen enough of that from Khorne."

Helia didn't know who Khorne was, or whoever these two were talking about, but it would seem that the head was gone for a reason, and he'd be in the same situation if he didn't bail.

If only it were that simple. He turned around and bumped into a strange being. With scaly skin, and a metal mask, it stared at Helia, almost as if he was curious about it.

Helia then assumed that this was the beast and tried to subdue him.

Although Helia succeeded, the beast did not fight back. In fact, it seemed to be laughing.

"Bindings. *Clearly you're no killer."*

"Who are you?" Helia demanded.

"A hunter **, namely of dangerous prey. *I've noticed your behavior and I watched you.*** I'm not impressed in the slightest." The beast broke his bindings and began to walk away.

"H-H-Hey! Get back here!"

"For what? **More frivolous banter?** Pass. I only hunt worthy prey, and you are not worthy. ***If you are truly curious, Looper, than my name is Scarface*** **, and your name is not worth anything to me."**

Helia blinked, and sighed. He did not want to fight anything, especially not something that kills and steals skulls for fun.

Scarface, for all it's worth, decided to ignore the guy. This one wasn't a fighter at heart.

Helia, for all it's worth for him, realized what kind of encounter he was in.

It only made him fear the unknown factors of the Loops more. The wrongness of it all.

So wrong. Helia thought of Scarface.

35.3 (lord Martiya)

"Say what?" Helia asked. When Riven had asked to talk with him in private he had expected many things, even that he had activated and was going to help him with everything's wrong in the current situation… But not this.

"I said, why exactly are you following Flora around? Looks suspicious." Riven repeated, word for word.

Helia internally debated about what to tell him. For a moment he considered telling him about the Loops, hoping he'd activate soon, but then rejected the idea: even if he did, for now he had no way to prove it to his extremely mistrustful friend, and he wasn't sure he could stop him from warning the others of his plans-you underestimate Riven at your own risk, as Mandragora and many others had found out the hard way. So he settled for a domesticated version, of how he and Flora used to date before they got separated

for a while, and now she was with Tecna. With Riven's story with Musa, Helia knew he'd be sympathetic to that.

"Didn't know Saladin's family would have such a weakling as a member." Or not.

"What?"

"You are a stalker, and if that isn't sign of mental weakness…"

"I'm not a stalker!"

"Then why are you following her everywhere? Are you some kind of time traveler trying to prevent a horrible future?"

If Helia hated something about Riven, it was his biting and accidentally painful sarcasm. If he didn't know better he'd think Riven had said that on purpose…

"Look, maybe I'm a bit hard on you." Riven admitted. "The point is, she has her own feelings and everything, and if you can't respect that you clearly don't deserve her, Saladin's grandson or not.

"And I know it's hard. I mean, look at me: found a hot and strong-willed girl, tried to make the first move, and Bloom couldn't have shot me down harder had she been vulgar."

Riven and Bloom?! These Loops were more wrong than he thought. And sadistic, they would have killed each other in a week.

"Then I notice Musa-and that hot and scary witch gets with her." Riven continued. "I continuously get rejected by any girl I can like, and it's painful, but am I stalking them? No. Maybe it's harder with an actual relationship breaking up, but you could get some help. The new healers in Lightrock, for example, may be self-taught but can actually do their job instead of brainwashing everyone. And if you don't trust them, and considering Icy is one of them I'd agree, Earth is full of therapists with even greater talent and skills."

"I am NOT a stalker." Helia repeated.

"So you say. But let me tell you this: get your act together fast, because if you cross the line I'll consider my duty to personally rip your heart out. Am I clear?"

"Crystal."

With that Riven left, and Helia concluded he couldn't have his help. Not unless he started Looping. But he'd make things right for him too.

35.4 (Awesomedude17)

"I've seen some weird stuff recently." Nabu admitted.

"Last Loop?" Aisha asked.

"Last five."

"Ooooh." Sky winced.

"No no. They weren't bad, but they were... strange."

"Mind telling us about it?" Musa asked.

"Sure. First, there was this Loop where some blonde guy with an afro confused everyone..."

Nabu and Beauty watched as Bobobo-bo Bo-Bobo's nose hairs grew to ridiculous lengths and became prehensile. Meanwhile, Don Patch and Jelly Jiggler started a yodeling match and the bald evil guy just watched in abject confusion.

"You get used to it." Beauty said.

"Really?" Nabu replied.

"...No. You don't."

"After that, I was something called a Custodes and we just installed a text to speech device into some emperor's throne..."

ABOUT FUCKING TIME.

"You can speak!"

I HAVE SO MUCH SHIT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT.

"And then I was a house owner and there was a cat and mouse trying to kill each other."

Nabu scowled as Tom and Jerry broke yet another lamp in their attempts to get the better of each other and promptly grabbed the both of them while they were focused on each other, and glared at them wordlessly.

Things became a lot more quiet after that.

"And there something involving a short, angry man."

"And just like that, my vengeance against those stupid ramune bottles has been given." Dan clapped his hands together, satisfied.

"YOU BLEW UP KYOTO!" Nabu shouted with shock.

"Eh. Eye of the beholder. And besides, it was only a little blown up with cottage cheese."

"Unbelievable."

"And finally, a superhero who fights crime in his literal underwear."

"TRA LA LAAAAAAAAAAA!"

Nabu immediately decided to act on his pre-Looping desire to move to Canada.

"And that sums up my last five Loops."

"There's only so much weirdness one person can get, I suppose." Flora remarked.

"You have no idea, Flora."

35.5 (Awesomedude17)

"Welcome to my Branch, Flora. Nice to meetcha, ha ha!" Mickey Mouse smiled.

"Thank you, Mickey. It's been a long time since me and the others had a Loop with zero troubles. Nabu especially seems happy to not deal with anything like Stands."

"Oh geeze. Which part?"

"He said it was Morioh."

"WHEW! That could've been worse for the guy."

"Yeah. He could've faced off with DIO."

Mickey cringed at that thought.

"Yeah."

"Wow. Anyway, how're the others?"

"Great. Techna and Musa are hanging out with Goofy, and Bloom seemed really excited to hang out with Donald for some reason."

"Does your Branch have any connections to Italy?"

"Our show was made in Italy. Why?"

"Ah! Donald and the ducks are absurdly popular in Italy. What's a good comparison... uhh... It's is like David Hasselhoff and Germany."

"Uh?"

"Knight Rider?"

"OH! Now I remember. Heh. Techna really likes that show."

"Huh." Mickey got silent in contemplation.

"So, what else is there to talk about?"

"I suppose I can tell you about that time where Spam was everywhere."

"UGH! Tell me about it. Fand said that the Hackers were involved."

"That explains that episode."

"Ah-hyuck! Gawrsh, it sure is nice ta meet all of y'all." Goofy said as he took the new visitors on the road.

"Likewise." Techna replied.

"So, where are we going?" Musa asked.

"Nothing special. Just some ice cream." Goofy replied.

"Goofy, are you sure this is the right way?" Techna said, realizing that something was off.

"I'm sure of it!"

"Well I suppose I should ask how we ended up on top of the construction site for a high-rise."

Goofy blinked, and then looked out the window.

"Uh oh. Somthin' wrong here."

Musa sighed. "Thank goodness I went to the restroom before we left."

"Hang on, girls."

Techna and Musa sighed. "Bring it."

Goofy floored it.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

"YAAAAAA-HA-HA-HA-HOOOOEEEEEEEY!"

A car flew by, chased by a wrecking ball that Oswald was desperately trying not to fall off of, Pete angry that the wrecking ball was wreaking havoc, Scrooge McDuck angry that Goofy nearly ran over his number one dime, and a taco truck covered in concrete and salsa.

Donald merely ignored it as he drank his coffee.

"It's way too early for this."

"Yeah. It is." Bloom remarked.

"So, how much of my stories have you read?"

"All of them. Carl Banks, Don Rosa, Al Taliaferro, Romano Scarpa, Marco Rota, Tony Strobl, Vicar, Daan Jippes, William Van Horn, Fecchi and Silvia Ziche."

"Wow. You really are a fan."

"Yeah, I know."

"...So, enjoy my autograph?"

"YES! Can I have another... or 50?"

Donald internally sighed. Bloom was nice, but she is definitely asking for a lot from him.

35.6

"There you are," Flora said, entering the room she and Techna shared. "Have you been in here all day?"

"Pretty much," Techna said, glancing up from her computer for a moment. "I've been going over my records."

"Records?"

"Project records," Techna said. "Things I've built, things I've been planning to build, you know, that sort of thing."

"Okay," Flora said, hanging her damp umbrella up to dry. "Any conclusions? You sound... resigned to something, I guess."

"Just a bit," Techna said. "A while back I was planning on building a fifth zord. Then you went and proposed and I completely forgot about it."

"Okay?" Flora said, looking up from untying her shoes. "I don't see why you're upset about it though."

"Not upset, just... well, resigned," Techna said. "I really should get around to building it, but making something as big as a zord takes so much time and effort. I like my inventions to be smaller than a building. And while I'm at it, I really should upgrade the old ones. I have access to a lot of technology now that I didn't have when I made them, and there are so many improvements I could make, but that's even more time and effort, and... Well, I guess I'm not really looking forward to spending that much time on a single project."

"I see," Flora said, lying down on the bed. "If you decide to go through with this, the usual rules still apply."

"I know," Techna said. "No using my pocket as a workspace. I still think it's a silly rule."

"If I let you use your pocket as a workspace I won't see you again for a week," Flora said. "I'd rather you didn't just disappear off the face of the loop again."

"That was one time," Techna protested weakly.

"And we're going to keep it that way," Flora said. "Now won't we?"

"Fiiine," Techna sighed, closing her laptop. "Maybe I'll get lucky and end up in one of those loops with giant programmable automated factories."

"You might," Flora said. "But now that you've said it, do you really think Yggdrasil's going to let you off that easily?"

35.7 (Awesomedude17)

"YOU WANT WHAT NOW?"

"A set of bombs. Something untraceable."

"S*** MAN, I GOT YOUR BOMBS HERE!"

"It's going to need to be a huge explosion. Enough to level entire planets."

"YES, I MOST CERTAINLY CAN DO THAT, SIR!"

"Great. Here's the down payment."

"LET'S SEE!" Mister Torgue looked at the pile of money, and grinned. "YOU GOT YOURSELF A F***ING DEAL! PUT 'ER THERE!" Mister Torgue spat in his hand.

Helia grinned as he returned the favor.

He just needed to sneak these into a Pocket and the contents would be good as gone.

35.8

Flora was watering her plants when the door burst open. Startled, she jumped, losing her grip on her watering can which flew into the air before coming back down on her head. "Ow..." she muttered, rubbing at the wet sore spot. She turned to find Diaspro and Bloom desperately holding the door shut. "There had better be a very good explanation for this," Flora said with a sigh.

"Hide us!" Diaspro said.

"Please! You're our only hope!" Bloom clarified.

"What did the two of you do this time?" Flora said, pinching the bridge of her nose. She appreciated the fact that Bloom and Diaspro were getting along, but they often brought out the more... *chaotic* ... aspects of each other's personalities. The two of them together could, on occasion, rival the Trix in causing mayhem.

"It wasn't us!" Bloom said.

"Not this time!" Diaspro added.

"Then who was it?" Flora asked.

"Stella!" the two fairies said in unison.

"And what did Stella do?" Flora asked, feeling more and more like an exasperated parent with each passing second.

"She's doing one of her fashion shows," Bloom said. "Well, she's planning one at least."

"Timmy asked her about the Omnitrix she got," Diaspro explained. "This led to a conversation where Timmy offered to help with reprogramming the thing, and then Stella got it into her head to design wardrobes for *all* of her alien forms."

"Okay..." Flora said. "How does this involve the two of you?"

"She wants my help with accessories!" Diaspro said. "Have you ever tried picking out jewelry for a living blob of slime? Once was more than enough, no thank you!"

"You've done it before?" Bloom asked.

"Long story, don't want to talk about it," Diaspro said.

"Okay, and how is Bloom involved?" Flora asked.

"She wanted me to give my opinion and take pictures," Bloom said. "And spread the word about the show when it actually happens."

"Got it," Flora said, massaging her temples. "You do know you can't hide from her forever, right?"

"We can certainly try!" Diaspro said.

"Just help us!" Bloom said.

Flora sighed again. "You could just get it over with and... You know what?" She pulled out her phone and dialed. "Yeah, they're in my room. Just make it quick, and-"

"Traitor!" Diaspro said.

"Let's run!" Bloom said, grabbing Diaspro and pulling her out the window, shattering it as she went. A second later Flora could hear the fluttering of wings as the pair of princesses made good their escape.

"Good, now I can have some peace," Flora said, putting down the phone that displayed a "call could not be completed as dialed" screen. She shook her head. Her fellow loopers would be the death of her.

35.9 (lord Martiya)

As he Awoke, Helia found himself looking at a rather unsettling woman. It was not the height-with Flora, the shortest of the Winx, being 175cm tall, she was about average. It wasn't the incredibly long green hair either-that was a common hair color and length in his Loop. What was unsettling were the eyes, eyes that seemed to pierce in his soul and understand him at the same time. And apparently she was the counselor at the school they were in.

"Are you Awake, mr. Saladin?" she asked him, just as the Loop memories told him his grandfather's name was his family name for this Loop. "You looked a bit-Loopy, if you forgive the term."

"Just a bit... I think I'd need to be Anchored." Helia replied, the words feeling like poison as he said them.

"If you need I can call Usagi. In the meantime, I am Sailor Pluto, also known as Setsuna Meioh. She of the Syndrome."

"The... What?"

"Setsuna Syndrome. A psychological condition named after me, in which a Looper feels that their home Branch should be in a certain way and does their utmost to obtain the result, no matter how insane their actions could be nor the damage they could cause. And I've been told you have some trouble settling down in your home Branch. Care to talk about it?"

Came to think, Helia had heard of it-mostly overheard from Darcy, who seemed to have a psychiatry hobby and would sometime talk with Musa about what she called the basket cases of Yggdrasil (surprising Helia when she had included her past self in the category-if nothing else she had been honest). And Setsuna Meioh's actions had been indeed legendary. Maybe she could help. Or confirm what he needed to do.

"It's about Flora. Well, everything, but mostly Flora. One night I go to sleep and we're dating, and the next I'm in the past, everything has changed, and Flora-Flora doesn't love me, and says it wasn't likely to work between us anyway. It's completely insane! And then there's the Trix, and Diaspro-they're out and-I'm rambling, am I?"

"Completely understandable. If I may suggest, you should think about this as a new beginning. Sure, things have changed, but now you can live new experiences, avoid past errors, and who knows, maybe you could find a girl who understands you and can make it work. After all, even you have things you would have changed if given the chance, didn't you?"

She was right. There was the "Saladin's grandson" bit, for starters. Always living in his shadow. Maybe now he could-

Then the school was shaken by an explosion, and the office was invaded by a giant fire-breathing chicken chased by a refined-looking young woman with aquamarine hair and a sand blonde woman that was even taller than Setsuna, who, after slapping her face and

whispering "Not again", engaged the intruders in combat, threatening to have them go to sleep without dinner.

But now Helia knew what to do. He had to return things to what they were meant to be, before the madness destroyed everything.

35.10 (Awesomedude17)

Interview Excerpt for SCP-8888 Iteration ▉▉▉▉▉▉ with SCP-8888-A-▉▉: Real Name and/or Alias Given: 'Flora Victoria'

Interview given is largely discussion on the Foundation's containment measures and the SCPs being held.

Log Begin

Dr. Glass: Mrs. Victoria, welcome to the Foundation. We thank you for your cooperation and we hope that for the rest of this iteration, you can be a great asset for us.

SCP-8888-A-▉▉: Thank you, Dr. Glass. I mostly enjoyed the tour.

Dr. Glass: Mostly?

SCP-8888-A-▉▉: There was the acid tank, and that unnatural being in it.

Dr. Glass: SCP-682.

SCP-8888-A-▉▉: Is that what it's called?

Dr. Glass: Indeed. It is quite violent.

SCP-8888-A-▉▉ sighs.

SCP-8888-A-▉▉: How dreadful.

Dr. Glass rubs his temples with his index fingers.

Dr. Glass: The Foundation contains all kinds of horrible things, and the means to do so are quite... horrific.

SCP-8888-A-[redacted]: I've overheard something about Procedure 110-Montauk. What is that about.

Dr. Glass: Classified. Information.

SCP-8888-A-[redacted] recoils in surprise from Dr. Glass' outburst. SCP-8888-A-[redacted] wisely decides to drop the subject.

Dr. Glass: This conversion is over. Get back to containment, SCP-8888-A-[redacted].

SCP-8888-A-[redacted] slumps in guilt. SCP-8888-A-[redacted] agreed to return to her cell until her services are needed.

End log

35.11 (Awesomedude17)

"This looks interesting. Let's ride it." Pyrrha spoke up.

Jaune looked at the ride his wife was likely referring to and raised an eyebrow.

"Revenge of the Mummy? Pyrrha, you sure? I heard it was scary."

"Please, Jaune, nothing can top that Loop."

"Oh... Seeing a zombie Nora is not a very pleasant experience."

"Tell me about it." A pause. "So, are we riding?"

"Sure, just don't scream in terror."

"Jaune~!" Pyrrha moaned in mock annoyance.

Jaune laughed as he walked into the ride with Pyrrha. When they finally reached the start of the long line, they met with two familiar faces.

"Flora, Techna! It's been a while."

"Jaune! Pyrrha! So good to see you both!" Flora pulled the two into a hug.

"Hey, let go, you're literally crushing us." Pyrrha said weakly.

"Oh! Sorry!"

"Oh no, I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"For... uhhh..."

"That's my Pyrrha." Jaune chuckled.

"Truly a match made in Heaven." Techna smirked.

"So, what brings you here?" Flora asked.

Jaune leaned against the railing. "Pyrrha wanted to try this out and while I could have said no, I decided to see if she squeals. You two?"

"Techna wants the thrill of being scared."

"Also to calculate the g-forces we'll be facing during the initial burst of speed." Techna slyly added.

"You really need to stop calculating every single minute thing."

"It has helped our private sessions together."

"Techna! Not in front of all these people!"

"Nah, it's not a big deal. Jaune and me prefer firsthand experience for such things anyway."

"Aw, now you're making me blush." Jaune scratched his head with a goofy smile on his face.

"Good. That means I'm a good wife."

"We're such dorks." Flora looked at her wife.

"And I wouldn't have it any other way." Techna replied.

The four had a quick laugh and eventually came to the ride itself. Sitting at the very front, the ride began.

"Scared yet?" Jaune asked.

"No." The other three said.

As the ride reached the treasure room, it became clear that things were about to become intense.

"Okay, this is going to be fast now, isn't it?" Flora asked.

"In a few moments." *Beep*

"Really, Techna?"

"Real-"

The ride began to accelerate suddenly and everything went through a dark room with strobes and glowing decorative Egyptian spirits.

Eventually, they stopped, and the scarabs began to crawl all over them.

"EEEEK!" Someone shrieked.

And then the ride rocketed them backwards.

After a brief speeding through the ride backwards, they came to smoke and a flashing lights.

"Approximately 72.4 kilometers per hour. Not that bad, all things considered." Techna remarked.

"Oh course." Flora rolled her eyes.

"You okay, Pyrrha?" Jaune asked.

"Well, I suppose zombie Nora is way scarier than this ride, though that scream at the scarabs seemed awfully masculine."

"Uh, heh?"

"Jaune, you were scared, weren't you?."

"Was not!"

"Was too."

As the two began to go back and forth, Techna caught a glimpse of Flora smirking, something that Techna shared.

Everyone, quite simply, had fun on the ride. That's all that mattered to them at the moment, and boy was it fun.

35.12 (Awesomedude17, Firehawk242)

Techna lifted the welding mask up and looked at her current handiwork.

Hmm, the coupling near the right interlock region could use some lubricant, and the wiring next to them could be refurbished. Techna flew down to fetch the tools needed to finish working on her zord.

Meanwhile, Helia watched from afar, trying not to be caught. He needed to put that bomb he got into the machine somehow without

her knowing it.

He needed to remove anything not from his own Branch. He had to to restore the natural balance of everything. He had to.

His opportunity soon came when Riven accidentally walked to the building area and expressed the obvious surprise that came from seeing a large robot. Helia was extremely grateful that Riven never Activated. He was a jerk, but he at least was consistent.

He snuck up to the machine, using extreme care not to be caught. Overhearing Techna explain the Loops to Riven got really awkward when the question of Musa and Darcy came up. That was something he needed to take care of too. They were enemies, not lovers. Helia snuck and planted the bomb next to what looked like an unstable power source and snuck away when he noticed Riven visibly agitated and Techna trying to reassure him that neither Darcy nor Musa were Awake and thus, were never going to date. He'd stay to see Riven's reaction, but he didn't want to be caught, so he ran as fast and as quietly as he could when Riven began to stomp off in the opposite direction, muttering to himself.

Helia hid himself and watched Techna return to her zord. He looked at the radio trigger connected to the bomb and smiled.

Once the bomb's out of range, it will explode and everything in Techna's Pocket will be gone for good.

Once Techna finished her tinkering, she Pocketed the zord and began to fly off, no doubt to make out with the woman who should have been his.

Helia walked away. That job was done.

---

beep

beep

beep

beep

beeeeeeeeeee-

Techna's eyes rolled up in her head and she collapsed.

"Techna!" Bloom shouted, catching the falling fairy before she could strike her head on the floor of the Great Hall. A moment later the fairy of Technology convulsed, spasming uncontrollably. "Get Flora!" Bloom barked out.

"On it!" Stella said, her Zoomix wings already forming.

"What's happening to her?" Timmy asked.

"I don't know," Bloom said. "Help me hold her still so she doesn't hurt herself."

There was a flash of light as the Anchor appeared. "What's happening to her?" Flora demanded.

"We were hoping you'd know!" Bloom said. "I have no idea!"

Techna took this opportunity to roll over and vomit. "Fairy Dust!" Flora said, yanking the pendant in question from her neck with enough force to snap the chain. She anointed Techna with the healing powder.

Techna spasmed again, her muscles seizing up and relaxing seemingly at random.

"Bloom! Call the Great Dragon!" Flora said.

"What?" Bloom demanded.

"Do it!"

"Wait!" There was a flash as Fand's avatar appeared. "Don't do that! The situation is precarious enough as is!"

"What happened?" Flora demanded.

"I'm not sure," Fand said. "Something exploded in Techna's pocket. The chain reaction... It destabilized things. I'm holding things together while my assistant puts together a patch. We're fixing things, just hold on a few minutes more."

"Her pocket destabilized?" Flora asked, carefully holding Techna down.

"You're fixing things?" Bloom asked, letting out a relieved sigh.

"You have an assistant?" Timmy asked.

"Yes, yes, and yes," Fand said. "No time to explain. I need to go back to focusing on fixing things. DON'T summon the Great Dragon. If you do that it could cause permanent damage. Bye!" With that, the Admin vanished again.

"Hold on Techna," Flora said, fighting back tears. "Help is on the way."

Helia watched through one of the windows of the great hall. Guilt roiled in his gut. He didn't want to hurt Techna, but this had to be done. It had to, if he was ever going to restore things to the way they should be.

He closed his eyes and hardened his heart yet again, the taste of betrayal bitter on his tongue.

"Easy, easy, you're okay," a voice drifted down through the haze that filled the world. The girl, Techna, that was her name, latched onto that voice, drawing strength from it. She pushed aside the fog filling

her mind, only to regret it as pain rushed in to fill the void. Her body ached, to the degree that she felt the pain in her soul.

"I'm-" She coughed. "I'm okay," she muttered.

"Techna!" Flora's voice. An instant later she was enfolded in an embrace. "You're okay." Sobbing, and points of wetness on her shoulder.

Techna pried her aching eyelids open. The Awake Winx were assembled around her, Bloom, Stella, Roxy, Diaspro, and of course Flora holding her in a death-grip of an embrace. Techna put her arms around Flora in her own hug, wincing in pain as she did. "What happened?" she asked.

"We don't know," Bloom said. "Fand said something exploded in your Pocket, kicking off a chain reaction. It was... bad."

"You were seizing when I got there," Diaspro said. "According to Timmy you also vomited at one point. If you're in pain, that's probably a contributing factor."

"Something in my pocket... exploded?" Techna asked. "Did Fand say what?"

"No." Stella shook her head. "I don't think she knows."

"Probably one of the wedding gifts, then," Techna said with a sigh. Flora finally released her.

"You're sure it wasn't one of your projects?" the Anchor asked.

"Yes," Techna said. "I take safety precautions. I just never got around to properly categorizing the wedding gifts. I really should have dealt with that."

"Do you... want to check if anything survived?" Roxy asked.

"I probably sho-"

"No," Flora said. "You are not getting out of bed until you're recovered. End of discussion."

"Okay," Techna said, in too much pain to argue. "What if I open my pocket so you guys can do it for me?"

"We'd be happy to help," Diaspro said.

"Is this the last one?" Flora asked.

"Yeah," Diaspro swallowed, looking out across the wreckage. Rubble, scrap metal, and bits of circuitry formed a depressing tableau. The crystal in her hand, an artificial silicon-carbon composite that made diamond look downright fragile by comparison, was one of the few things to survive the devastation. "This is the last of them." She handed it over to Flora.

"At least she didn't lose too much of her data," Flora sighed, staring down at the data crystal. "And now I'm going to have to go through my pocket to make sure there's nothing in there that could explode like this."

"I think we all need to do that," Diaspro said. "Any progress on figuring out what happened in here?"

"No," Flora said. "The boundaries of her pocket reflected the blast several times over. I doubt even Timmy could figure it out."

"Big explosion," Diaspro said.

"Yeah, well, Techna keeps some powerful stuff in her pocket," Flora said. "Copies of the Codex for example. I'm guessing those went up in the chain reaction."

"Oh," Diaspro said. "Well, that would explain a lot."

"I know," Flora said. "At least our photo album survived."

"It was on one of the crystals?"

"Yes," Flora said, biting her lip. "All we lost was things. We can replace them."

"Good luck," Diaspro said, putting a hand on Flora's shoulder. "Let us know if you need anything."

"We will," Flora said.

35.1: Thaaat's not a good sign.

35.2: To be fair, that's a pretty scary situation to be in.

35.3: And this is why Riven's actually a pretty decent guy. Sure, his relationship with Musa is the definition of dysfunctional, but give him credit for trying.

35.4: Did you *really* say that to an Anchor? Really, Nabu? It's pretty much a given that she's seen weirder.

35.5: Huh. Have the Winx crossed over with Kingdom Hearts yet? If not, they should probably get on it.

35.6: Every couple has their little rules. Some are stranger than others.

35.7: Helia. No. Stahp. No. Stahp.

35.8: Just another day in the lives of the looping Winx.

35.9: So close, and yet so far...

35.10: I honestly have no idea what this procedure is either.

35.11: What a bunch of dorks. Oh well, at least they're cute.

35.12: Well, crap.

Chapter 36

Adminspace

"Okay, what did you do *this* time?" Skuld demanded, pinching the bridge of her nose.

"It wasn't me!" Fand said. "Not this time!"

"Miele?" Skuld asked.

"It actually wasn't," the digital assistant said from Fand's terminal. "Fand was actually pretty responsible this time around."

"Well I suppose it had to happen eventually," Skuld muttered. She was relying on an illegally created digital intelligence to keep tabs on one of her subordinates, and the digital intelligence was turning out to be more reliable than most of said subordinates. When did Skuld lose control of her life? "If you didn't do it, what happened? I was getting virus alerts on my terminal. Something must have happened."

"Well the Co-" "We underes-"

"One at a time," Skuld said. "Miele. What happened?"

"We're still trying to piece together the details," Miele said. "In simplest terms however, an artifact from a previous iteration of the loop tried to force a direct connection between a looper's Pocket and a section of the current iteration of the loop. That probably explains the virus alert, it's pretty similar to a Trojan style virus." Miele shuddered. "I hate viruses."

"Okay," Skuld said. "I think I can guess what happened, but spell it out for me."

"The system had a serious error," Miele said. "Due to how Pocket openings are handled, the system thought her looping iteration was in two places at once. That's fairly stable if the Mikasa protocol is in place, but it wasn't. The end result was that the system tried to force her to be in both places at once, creating even more errors. That was bad enough, but the loopers almost made it worse. They were seconds away from calling up the local Loop-Aware deity in an attempt to fix things."

"I see," Skuld said, taking notes. "Fand, how did you handle this?"

"Well, I started by trying to keep the erroneous programs from activating," Fand said. "It slowed down the rate of deterioration, giving Miele time to put together a proper patch for me to implement."

"And by proper you mean rushed and slap-dash, right?" Skuld asked.

"It worked," Fand said. "Long enough for us to resolve the problem properly."

"I'm working on creating a more permanent version of the patch," Miele chimed in. "I doubt this'll happen again, but I think we should make sure."

"You aren't directly tampering with the code?" Skuld asked sharply.

"No ma'am," Miele said. "If you recall, I have read-only access to the code in question. I just create potential solutions before handing them off to Fand."

"I see," Skuld said. That was a lot closer to Miele programming the loop than she was comfortable with, but given the results, she couldn't justify taking them to task for it. She'd have to keep an eye on things though. "I assume the loopers were prevented from making things worse?"

"Yes," Fand said. "They're really cooperative if you tell them what to do."

"I see," Skuld said. She was silent for a moment, then sighed. "Okay, well done you two. You handled a crisis rather well. Miele, I want a copy of that patch in my inbox by tomorrow morning."

"It's not complete," Miele protested.

"I don't care, I want to see what you're doing," Skuld said. "I'll want updates on your progress on the patch as you develop it as well."

"Yes ma'am," Miele said.

"Fand," Skuld said. "I want you to finish clean up here. I assume there are still a number of errors lurking in the system. Let me know if you need help, and be sure to submit your reports on time."

"Yes ma'am," Fand said.

"Alright," Skuld said. "Good work this time around. Don't let it go to your heads." She got up and headed back to her office. Well, that was one of her five thousand and sixty headaches dealt with for the day.

36.1 (Awesomedude17)

"It exploded?!" Musa half-yelled out.

"Yes! Ow!" Flora covered her ears.

"I can't believe this."

"Believe it." Techna said weakly. "Ugh, Fand got back to us about the damages. My soul is fine, but she'll need to restore a few parts, here and there. She's doubtful about restoring the contents though. Good thing those photos survived. If they were destroyed... I'd..."

"Shh... don't cry. It'll be all better soon." Flora comforted Techna.

"I know."

"If only we could figure out what happened." Bloom huffed as she rested her chin on her hand.

"That's obvious. Something exploded, and a chain reaction followed." Diaspro leaned against the wall.

"What exploded then? That's the million dollar question." Roxy said.

"What about Tracix? We barely use it." Musa suggested.

Everyone in the room went silent at that sentence. Soon after, everyone barring Techna and Musa made audible slaps to their faces.

"We're a bunch of dinguses." Stella said.

"Ugh! I can't believe we forgot about that. Would've been useful last Loop." Flora groaned.

"To be fair, we were under a lot of stress." Techna said.

"Yeah, true. Techna?"

Techna nodded as Flora entered her Pocket.

"Tracix!"

The contents of Techna's Pocket reformed as the memories played out. A single zord was missing from where Flora was, so she had to be at the point where she was working on it. She flew over to wherever the gifts from the wedding was and looked over everything.

"Okay... time to catalog all of... these things... oh man."

"Nope. Damn it."

Flora sighed as she finished looking over all the gifts. Aside from the gifts Pinkie got them, none of them would explode in a way that would destroy the Pocket, and even the gifts from Pinkie were rather stable.

Dejected, she flew back to the zords and prepared to leave.

beep

"Huh?"

beep

beep

beep

beeeeeeeeeee-

An explosion blew up the newly arrived zord, resulting in the chain reaction. The place went bright and loud and Flora shouted in agony as her senses overloaded. Once everything went back to normal, it became very familiar.

After exiting the Pocket, Flora had a shocked look on her face.

"What did it?" Techna softly asked.

"Your zord. It was the one that destroyed your Pocket."

Gasps came out from everyone present.

"What? Y-you can't be serious." Techna said.

"I am. I checked everything, and your zord was the cause of it. I'm sure."

Techna looked at her hands and buried her face in them, sobbing.

"It's my fault. It was my shoddy work that nearly killed me."

Flora wrapped her arms around Techna and motioned for everyone to leave. As Techna began to sob into Flora's shoulder, everyone walked out, solemn.

36.2 (Awesomedude17)

"I certainly didn't see this coming." Flora blinked.

"Me neither, but we're the same person." Flynn shrugged.

The two looked at the sad looking Techna and Terry. Flora and Flynn sighed.

"They've been like that since their Pocket exploded." Flynn said.

"I suppose they both know why we warned against working on their Zords in their Pocket."

"A bit harsh, don't you think?"

"I know. I'm not sure what exactly happened. Thank the Dragon that those photos survived."

"Silver linings. You want to talk to them?"

"Communication is the key for a healthy relationship."

"Good. I'm sure the others are faring better."

"Stop being fussy, Steve." Musa pouted.

"And don't crash the Loop." Marcus folded his arms.

"Geh!" Steve's eye twitched.

"...Am I always like that during gender flip Loops?" Stella blinked.

"Yes." Musa and Marcus replied.

"...I heard from Bloom that Earth has good therapists. Maybe I'll look into talking to one about this issue. I'm creeping myself out."

"Oh, don't you start with me, me!" Steve growled in restrained fury.

"I'll get the duct tape." Musa said.

"I'll get the nylon rope." Marcus added.

"Andrea's a girl's name." Blake and Bloom laughed.

"Not in Italy, where our show is." Andrea huffed.

"And it's quite appropriate for our home." Aisha added.

"Whatever you say, ladies." Bloom laughed out loud.

"Oh! This totally makes up for being a man." Blake said as he catches his breath.

"Be lucky you're my friend or the real disadvantage of being a man would've came into play." Andrea said with a glare.

Blake immediately shut up.

"I just realized something. How would Flora and Techna react?" Bloom asked.

What looked like a magical shockwave exploded from the distance. The wave hit the four, leaving a sense of euphoria and love.

"Oh. That's how." Aisha blinked.

"Guess some loving should show Techna and Tech that they're not alone." Andrea nodded.

"Yeah."

36.3 (lord Martiya)

"Obviously, it's sabotage." Darcy said once Diaspro told her and the sister what had happened with Tecna's pocket.

"I'm sorry... What?" Diaspro asked.

"Tecna does NOT do shoddy work. Learned it the hard way back in baseline when she had x-ray goggles that saw through one of my best darkness spells. As for who did that and how... Well, that's what we're gonna find out."

"And what if she did screw up?" Icy pointed out, taking Darcy's usual role.

"She did not, and we're gonna investigate anyway."

"And we should get around tracking down our mystery Looper. Maybe they know something." Stormy suggested.

"The mystery Looper?" Diaspro asked again.

"Forgot you weren't Looping yet... Well, back when Flora and Tecna married an unidentified stealth Looper from our own branch delivered the Sailor Soldiers' wedding gifts. We still have no idea who they were." Icy explained. "So, here's what we're going to do: sisters, you search for the mystery Looper, Diaspro, you try and get a piece of the Zords to analyze, just in case, and I have a talk with Rachel. That girl is more annoying than she should be..."

"And here's the situation." Diaspro told to the phone. "Any idea what could have happend?"

"A few, and none good. Going to check a few things before saying anything." the person at the other side replied, just before an inhuman scream echoed. *"By the way... Icy already got Rachel?"*

"Icy already got Rachel."

36.4 (Jeanne Summers)

'EMERGENCY MEETING ALFEA DORM NOW!'

It was unusual for any of the Loopers to call an emergency meeting, since they were typically capable of handling anything that could be considered an emergency by themselves.

So when all the Awake loopers showed up to the Alfea Dorm, there was a long moment of extreme confusion when they realised that Diaspro had called the emergency meeting, and she seemed to be vibrating with utter glee.

"I FINALLY HAVE BABY PICTURES! I looped in like, super early!"

Standing at the back of the group, Helia watched understanding travel like a wave through the other loopers, Bloom shrieking in glee as she launched herself at the blonde.

"Show me, show me!"

Diaspro began handing out photo albums to the group, "isn't my son just the squishiest little cuteness *ever* ?!"

"Oh my – he was born with that hair? I always thought he used really good product," Stella cooed over one of the albums.

"Sweetie, the glorious Strife locks are all natural... and generally immune to gravity spells."

"Son?" Helia felt sick, and more than a little confused.

"Yeah," Brandon leaned against the couch next to the newest looper, "sometimes loopers cross over into specific loops more than others, Diaspro ends up in the Lifestream branch like, once every few thousand loops, and she always loops in as the Anchor's mother. The Admin try to keep loopers away from parenthood if they weren't parents in baseline, but Diaspro? Motherhood did her good."

"Darn straight," Diaspro interrupted from her place across the room, "*and,* I am officially a MILF."

"Ohh, scandalous gossip," Stella grinned, "tell me everything."

Helia tried not to react as he watched the meeting unfold, flicking through the photo albums that were passed his way.

This was so wrong, this was so, so wrong.

This was not Diaspro, this was the antithesis of what Diaspro was supposed to be.

Helia kept careful control of his expression as he handed off the most recent album.

He knew what his next step had to be.

36.5 (Awesomedude17)

Diaspro looked at the newest addition to her Pocket. Marked with a clear name.

Training Room

Looking over it, she decided that she had plenty of free time.

"You ready?"

The crystalline being appeared next to her, nodding.

"Good. Let's get to training."

Stand Name: Keep Hope Alive

Stand User: Diaspro

Destructive Power: B

Speed: C

Range: D

Durability: A

Precision: D

Developmental Potential: B

It was quite interesting how she grew to think of her Stand beyond an extension of herself. When Diaspro got her Stand, it wasn't exactly the best she had. Heck, DIO thoroughly trounced her so much, she looked like she just got out of a car wreak.

But thanks to the aid of her newly gained cousin, Jotaro, her new grandfather, Joseph and whoever new Joestars she met, either by chance or simply because she set out to find them, she had learned everything to know about how Stands work.

Needless to say, she knew that her new power was dangerous, as Nabu attested once she told everyone else about it.

Come to think of it, she never had a chance to tell Helia about it. One more thing to put on the errand list.

Coming into the training room, she decided to check out the obstacle course.

Certainly more dangerous than the entrance exam at Alfea, but not enough to outright kill her if she slipped up.

Let's do this.

Bang bang bang

"Ugh, should've invested in durability magic. That way, it wouldn't be one and done."

Keep Hope Alive looked sad.

"Aw, don't worry, buddy. It's not your fault. We both just got a little too enthusiastic about honing our skills, especially with regards to the sword fighting."

The two cringed.

"So, let's get out of here. The castle is probably going to look for us soon."

The Stand nodded, and disappeared.

Diaspro got out of her Pocket and appeared near the outskirts of the castle she called home.

"My liege, there you are. I take it that Sky's actions have hit particularly hard?"

"Yes. They have. I just needed time alone." Diaspro lied.

"Well, I suppose. Regardless, we have received something for you."

"Do tell." Diaspro said with an intrigued eyebrow.

"It is in your room."

Now Diaspro was really curious. Walking to her room, she found it.

A giant baby blue teddy bear.

"How... nice."

"It is a gift from an anonymous admirer. Enjoy."

Diaspro gave one last glance at her servant and then entered her room. Looking over and feeling the teddy bear, she indeed confirmed that it was indeed snuggly and cute. Smiling in amusement, Diaspro then thought about the size of the thing and decided to check for anything strange inside, having Keep Hope Alive reach in and feel it.

Keep Hope Alive had a concerned look, prompting Diaspro to teleport it away.

"Seriously, someone tries to assassinate me with a freaking bomb. I probably should've used something to trace the bomb back. Eh, it's probably long gone by now." Diaspro walked away, prepared to relay the news to the other Awake Loopers.

Meanwhile, Helia cursed himself. Looks like they were wising up to the bombings ever since Techna lost her Pocket.

Ugh! What to do? There's no way to keep this up.

Quietly, he sneaked away, thinking about the ways he could fix things.

In the depths of his mind, a connection was made.

"Assassination?" Stella reacted with shock.

"Yes. Someone delivered a bomb to me, and Sky's Awake, so it can't be a horrible version of him." Diaspro pinched the bridge on her nose.

"Who'd want you dead?"

"I don't know. All I know is that it failed."

"What did you do with the bomb?"

"Teleported it away."

"Where?"

"I don't know. I just did it because it happens every so often. Just enough for it to be something noteworthy and something to talk about. The bomb? Hopefully nowhere important."

Bloom and her adoptive family stared at the news report saying that Pluto had exploded. No one was sure what happened, but Bloom assumed that her fellow Loopers were involved somehow.

"This is definitely not what I was expecting." Bloom absentmindedly said.

"I don't think anyone could. Guess we now have eight planets."

Oh yeah. Our show debuted before the news about Pluto came. Bloom thought to herself.

36.6 (Awesomedude17)

"Excuse for a moment while I try to process what the fuck you just said. Her Pocket did what now?" The Postal Dude asked for clarification, lowering his sunglasses.

"She said that something blew up in her Pocket and something in it caused her soul to freak out and cause seizures. Get your hearing checked, all those gunshots ain't doing good for your hearing."

"Fuck you, other me."

"Nah, fuck you."

"Hey, quit speaking to the voice in your head. This is serious!" Bloom snapped her fingers at the already annoyed Anchor.

"Well pardon my French, but I know it's fucking serious. Could have easily happened to anyone, you and me included, buddy."

"Didn't take you for a guy with a little pesky thing called morality. Remind me, how many people have you killed?"

"Okay, fuck this. Magic my evil voice in my head so I can get some fucking quiet."

"I could stretch my legs. Learn to do that dance with the pelvic thrusts and the crotch chops."

"Uh, okay." Bloom cast a spell, and the Other Postal Dude appeared.

"Ah, much better. I feel like a million bucks."

"Whatever you say. The original topic?"

"Alright, so the Pocket thing. Anything noteworthy?"

"The Trix think it's sabotage."

"Someone really hates Techna then." The Dude remarked.

"I highly doubt someone like DIO would sneak a bomb into Techna's Pocket."

"The guy's ego is huge. I'm not surprised that he wouldn't do that." The Other Dude admitted. "Better ask around. Pick up hints."

"It's the only thing we can do now, I suppose."

"Right. Now fuck off. I am feeling a craving for really crappy pizza, and that gives me the shits."

"Ew." Bloom walked away.

"You're a fucking disgusting moron." The Dude grimaced.

"Said the occasional public nudist." The Other Dude smirked.

"Touche. Touche."

36.7 (Awesomedude17)

Lilith, being a Vault Hunter, always dealt with the unusual and the depressing as much as she dealt with idiots and crazies.

A somewhat somber Stella was clearly something that was under the former catagory.

"What happened?"

"It's about Techna."

Lilith sighed. "Let me get the others."

"I can't believe it. If those witches are right, then you need to find out who did that and tear them a new orifice immediately." Claptrap spoke his mind.

"Ugh! I can't believe I'm agreeing with junk pile here, but he's right." Mordecai slammed his fist on the table.

"Seriously, if I had a grudge against anybody, I'd make it obvious immediately." Handsome Jack said. "For example. Mister Torgue, your abs are disgusting."

"I FIND YOUR COMMENTS TO BE INCREDIBLY HURTFUL! ON ANOTHER NOTE, WAS IT A HUGE EXPLOSION?"

"It destroyed the entire Pocket." Stella explained.

"REALLY? IF IT WEREN'T DEPRESSING, IT WOULD LIKELY HAVE BEEN EPIC! SPEAKING OF EXPLOSIONS, I THINK SOMEONE ELSE FROM YOUR BRANCH CAME HERE!"

"Yeah, Flora. I know."

"NOT HER, SOME PRETTY LOOKING BOY NAMED HELIA! HE BROUGHT SEVERAL BOMBS FROM ME! THE PLANET KABOOM 42! COMING TO A STORE NEAR YOU NEVER BECAUSE NO ONE WANTS TO BUY IT! WHY?"

Stella blinked in surprise. "Wait, back up. Helia was here, and he brought bombs?"

"YEP! HE LOVED EXPLOSIONS SO MUCH, HE BROUGHT THEM ALL! ALL 20 OF THEM! HE WILL CREATE AN AWESOME FIREWORKS SHOW WITH THEM!"

Stella blinked in confusion.

Why would Helia buy so many bombs?

36.8 (ScyBlade)

Vergil was willing to admit that he wasn't expecting to be raised by royals, but he wasn't going to complain about being a Prince. Though since his younger brother was born to his adopted parents, Sky was the official heir.

"Thinking about your family this Loop?" his erstwhile roommate, and actual brother (in Baseline and current Loop), Dante asked.

"Yes." Vergil answered. "Any plans?" he asked, while packing some things into a suitcase.

"Nothing solid, but I was curious about something." Dante replied, stroking his chin.

"Oh?" "One of the local Big Bads apparently thinks of melee as 'barbaric' and folds when given a decent strike."

"Dante, it appears you were correct" Vergil stated. "Why did I even bother with a Devil Arm?"

"Probably because we haven't tried putting Valtor against someone without magic." Icy commented, before entombing the villain in ice.

"What about Lupin?" Musa brought up.

"Wouldn't count even if he hadn't used Fand's replacement for the Relix to take him out." Flora countered. "He is an impossible thief after all."

"That said, every option we've used involved powers, if not magic." Techna noted. "Perhaps we should do some testing. Unfortunately, bringing in unpowered non-Loopers to deal with a threat such as Valtor has ethical issues."

"So, how's your gun collection coming along, Flora?" Dante asked.

36.9 (Awesomedude17)

"Looper Olympics?" Diaspro asked.

"Yep. Something the Saiyans are organizing." Bloom affirmed.

"Saiyans?"

"Right. Aliens that look human that love to fight. Brandon's thinking about doing the dungeon crawl with Timmy, and they're looking for two others. Interested?"

"Nah. Do they have sword fighting though?"

"Yes, they do. They also got fencing."

"Hmm... color me intrigued. I'll decide on the two. Might distract me from everything that just happened a while ago."

"UGH! Tell me about it." Bloom shook her head.

"Dungeon crawling." Darcy raised an eyebrow. "I'm in."

"Really? That easily?" Timmy blinked.

"The entire concept sounds good, so I'm in."

"That was easy. Too easy." Brandon looked at Aisha appearing around the corner, carrying a backpack filled to the brim with various gear. "Okay, this isn't what we were expecting. Aisha, did you want to join the Yggdrasil Olympics too?"

"Dungeon crawling, Hub boxing, Hub 100 meter run. Thought about how the former needed four participants, so I cut a deal with Darcy."

"She's going to be my pack mule for the Loop, and she can't Pocket a single thing. Call it training."

"I suppose we're partners. We're going to have to train for the dungeon crawl, and seeing as we're in a death world-" Timmy trailed off with a grin.

"Team building! Woooo!" Brandon cheered.

"Don't do that." Darcy said flatly.

"Sorry."

36.10 (Trumpet of Doom, Jeanne Summers)

Diaspro opened the door to her room to discover a small bag and an envelope sitting on her bed.

She slowly approached and sat down next to them. Nothing happened, which was probably a good sign.

She opened the envelope first. It held a note, not in any handwriting she immediately recognized:

A little bird told me a while ago that you'd never had a gift from a secret admirer that wasn't an attempt to kill you.

So I thought I'd give you this. I respect the way you've handled your breakup with the boy you loved, or thought you loved, and maybe some time we can get to know each other better.

The note was unsigned.

"'Maybe some time'?" Diaspro asked softly, shaking her head. "If only you knew." The Loop was ending in a couple of days, so whoever had sent it wouldn't have an opportunity before the reset.

Come to think of it, who could have heard about her awful luck with secret admirers? She had once mentioned it to...

'He didn't' she thought, uncertain, even as she re-examined the note. 'If I account for him writing with his off hand...'

Diaspro smiled to herself as she realised who the 'Secret Admirer' had to be. Setting the note aside, she opened the bag to discover a bar of chocolate. After casting a few spells to determine that it wouldn't kill her, drug her, or set off any allergies, (because she knew better than to disregard the infinitesimal chance she was wrong,) she unwrapped it and took a bite.

It was the best chocolate she'd had in a while

36.11 (Awesomedude17)

Helia sighed as he walked in some random direction, deep in thought about what is going on.

He decided to distract himself from everything that was stressing him out.

Some bangs rang out in the distance and he decided to investigate. If anything, it'd be something to consider for the future if it was applicable.

After a few minutes of walking, he came across a strange set up.

There were several dozen stumps that presumably were targets of some kind, several types of targets ranging from bullseyes and silhouettes to pictures of some blonde, handsome man in various flamboyant poses and for some reason, a couple that were shirtless.

A bit off to the side was a very large wall, with guns of all makes and models hanging off it, many of which Helia couldn't recognize, due to some looking very alien in nature.

But that wasn't the main focus for Helia.

The main focus was Timmy and Flora opening fire upon the targets they probably set up, with Timmy using typical Specialist guns and Flora using a big honking rifle that looked like it'd dislocate even a well built man's shoulder, and she was managing to rapidly fire it with no issues whatsoever.

"What is that?" Helia said, making himself known.

"Helia." Flora said with surprise.

"Relax, I'm Awake."

"Oh. Okay. This is the Harkonnen. I picked this up during the Loop I became a vampire."

"How do you get ammunition?"

"Techna... or at least I used to."

"Hmm?" Helia feigned ignorance.

"Right." Timmy looked over to the side with some sadness. "Techna's Pocket exploded."

"Everything gone?"

"No. There were a few things that survived."

"Like the photos." Flora smiled faintly.

"Photos?" Helia blinked.

"Oh right! You weren't even Activated during that time."

"Neither were Diaspro, Daphne and Nabu, right?" Timmy rubbed his chin.

"I think Sky wasn't Awake either."

"I think I'll see them later." Helia waved the two off. "Right now, I'd like to ask something to you Flora."

"Yes?"

"When did you get into firearms?"

Flora sighed. "To be honest, I'm actually not that big a fan."

"Really? That wall is full of guns, like what is that?" Helia pointed at the cobbled together mess of a firearm.

"That would be my kustom shoota from when I was an Ork."

"Which I still say are very similar to fairies." Timmy interjected.

Briefly imitating an Ork, Flora replied with "Oh, zog off! I am not 'n 'da mood ta deal wit' yer nonsense."

"What the heck?" Helia blinked.

"That how the Orks speak when I became on. Think green hulking brutes who are essentially football hooligans with axes and noisy guns that grow bigger with each victory against other big monsters."

"So if you don't even like them, why do you even have them?"

"From my past experiences... stress relief."

Helia looked incredulous, then looked at the hunky blonde silhouette that was riddled with holes.

"I think that's understating it."

"Probably. It seems like every time things get dead serious, I end up using guns. Become a vampiric slave to Vlad Tepes before killing Nazi vampires, guns. Kill an alien that killed all my friends, guns. Whatever might be coming to us soon, guns. I have a lot of guns and knowledge about those guns, Helia, and it's all thanks to the fact that my early Looping life forced me into it."

Flora looked Helia right into his eyes.

"Sometimes you're forced to change."

Helia blinked, and nodded.

"I couldn't agree more. Bye Flora. You have fun." Helia walked away.

"Does Helia seem off to you?" Timmy asked.

"I guess he's still in shock about me and Techna." Flora sighed.

"Probably. Want to continue with your therapeutic weapons demonstration?"

Flora grabbed an M-96 Mattock and took aim. "Sure. Shepard would want me to keep my skills sharp."

A/N: Apologies for the delay. Life has been rather hectic for me lately, so compilation has been delayed. But hey, it's here now! Yay!

Adminspace: Yeek. That's not good.

36.1: Yeah, Traceix would have been useful. Oops.

36.2: ...Um. That's... odd.

36.3: I feel very sorry for this Rachel person.

36.4: On the one hand, d'aaawww. On the other hand, Helia, stahp. Stahp.

36.5: Well, I guess that firmly settles that particular debate.

36.6: I don't even know what's happening here.

36.7: And the threads start to unravel. Here comes trouble...

36.8: Yeesh, Valtor gets no respect.

36.9: Huh. Interesting concept.

36.10: *gurk* We apologize, the feels have temporarily overwhelmed our poor compiler. We'll have him resuscitated shortly.

36.11: Projectile therapy!

Chapter 37

37.1 (Jeanne Summers)

Brandon frowned at Sky's blank expression as the blonde stared unblinking at the wall.

"You, uh... you okay man?" The prince didn't respond to his question, so Brandon did the sensible thing, and poked him in the cheek, "SKY! You okay man?"

This time the blonde startled, his eyes moving to his friend, though they took a few second to focus.

"Brandon..."

Sky sounded so out of it, Brandon was about to start checking for a concussion, "yeah man?"

"Loops are really frickin' weird. Girls, are really frickin' weird."

"Ah," Brandon thought he had a clue what was happening here, "you live a few thousand loops and you start to think you're ready for anything, then something happens and you realise: NOPE! The multiverse still has things that will throw you."

"I just... she just... they just..."

"Breathe buddy, just breathe," Sky took a few deep breathes, when he was calmer Brandon asked, "what happened?"

"I was... going to see Bloom, invite her out... for a, a thing, a picnic and, uh... Diaspro..."

"Diaspro?"

"She was naked Brandon," Sky looked at his friend like he hoped Brandon had the answers.

"Define naked?"

"Panties, pasties and body paint Brandon, my sort of girl friend was painting my ex-fiancé's mostly naked body."

"Oh yeah, that," Brandon tried not to laugh as he realised what Sky had walked in on, "Diaspro's been working on her 'over-attachment to her physical appearance, as it relates to her sense of identity,' and Bloom's taken up body painting. Diaspro being Bloom's canvas is win-win for both of them."

Sky looked betrayed, for a second Brandon couldn't figure out why, then it hit him, "Stella told me, the girls probably didn't say anything to you because of how weird everything is with you three right now, sorry, I figured it would have weirded you out or would have mentioned it."

There was a brief silence, broken by Timmy as he entered the room.

"Uhh... interrupting something?"

"Nah man, Sky's just *seen things* ."

"Yeah, how bad?"

"Bloom painting mostly naked Diaspro."

"Oh right the body art thing. Sky man, have a drink," Timmy pulled three bottle of beer from his Pocket and handed him one. Brandon grabbed the second bottle and Timmy opened the third as he sat down beside his team mates. "But seriously, you're going to see a lot of things that will end up under the 'I've *seen things* ' label, like there was this one time, way, way back now, when I was the only guy awake right, and..."

37.2 (Jeanne Summers)

The air was heavy with humidity, the distant rumble of thunder promised heavy rain.

But the Winx Unit was already under heavy rain, unfortunately, not the kind that could be stopped with an umbrella.

"We're pinned down! We need back up!" Aisha screamed into the radio as the staccato cracking of guns tried to drown her out.

"We're five minutes out!" came the crackling reply.

"There's no time," Techna spat, "give me the package, I can make it."

"NO!" Flora grabbed her wife by the arm before she could take the package, "it's way too dangerous, back up will be here soon.

"Not soon enough, don't forget, *their* backup is on its way too."

Weeping Flora let her go.

"I love you," Techna pressed a kiss to her lips and grinned, "cover me," before darting out from their makeshift cover.

She made it half way before a bullet found home.

"NOOO!" Flora ran without thought towards her fallen partner, a bullet catching her as she neared. She fell to the ground, still breathing, and began to crawl. "Tech..."

She was so focussed on her wife, Flora didn't here the familiar tank roll into firing range.

"Aisha, we're here!" Stella's hands were tight where the gripped the radio, the outdated technology creaking in her grip.

"It's too late Stella, Flora and Techna, they're..."

Inside the tank Bloom snarled, "bullshit, they'll be fine, but we have to take out the enemy!"

"Loaded!" Diaspro called out.

"Ready to fire!" Musa confirmed.

"Uh girls!" Roxy didn't get to finish her warning as the tank was hit.

The missile was far more powerful than it should have been for the time period, the tank was ripped to pieces.

From her place in hiding, broken leg akimbo, Aisha screamed and-

"WHAT is going on here!"

The eight girls sat up faster than humanly possible, their eyes all tracking to the same location as the Magical reality Chamber deactivated around them.

"Miss Griselda," Stella blanched, "you're... looking well, this evening."

Griselda's eye narrowed dangerously.

"Girls," Faragonda adjusted her pince-nez and waited.

"Miss Faragonda, we're going to be honest here," Flora leaned forwards, "The eight of us, plus one other fairy, three witches from Cloud Tower and some of the boys from Red Fountain... are all stuck in a time loop, the cause of which, is so far beyond our pay grade, even the Great Dragon doesn't have the ability to fix it.

"We understand that using the Magical Reality Chamber without permission was wrong, and we're sorry, we can't promise it won't happen again, but we'll try to remember if we don't have permission in the future."

There was a long moment, as Faragonda looked over the girls wit a practised eye.

"Very well, I'll be expecting perfect marks from the eight of you for the remainder of you time here, and you shall all be staying at school for the next optional field trip."

Eight faces flashed a grimace, 'optional field trip' was code for school chaperoning to fun events, like concerts or carnivals.

They may have seen them all a billion times, but they were still fun.

"Yes Miss Faragonda," eight voices replied in sync.

"Good, then off to bed." The headmistress watched the girls trail out, smiling as the broke into giggles on the other side of her door.

"You're far too lenient on them," Griselda frowned.

"Oh come on Griselda, it was just a bit of fun, you remember fun."

Griseda's frown deepened as she huffed fondly, a smile threatening the corner of her lips.

37.3

"Techna? Where are you?" Flora asked, looking around the house she and Techna owned for this loop.

"Down here," Techna's voice floated up from the basement. Flora headed down the stairs, then turned right. Techna was in the workshop Flora had quietly ensured the house had, despite Techna's reluctance to do any tinkering in the wake of her pocket's destruction. Techna was seated at the workbench, staring at an assortment of parts.

"What are you making?" Flora asked.

"Not sure," Techna said, turning to look back over her shoulder.

"Well, good luck," Flora said. "I need to get going, the greenhouse doesn't take care of itself, but I'll be back for lunch." She leaned down for a kiss. "See you then."

"Have a good day," Techna said, turning back to her pile of components.

Flora was glad to see Techna back in the workshop. She'd been skittish about building anything for far too long, and it wasn't good for her. Hopefully getting back on the horse would help shake her out of the funk she'd been in.

Flora wiped the sweat from her forehead as she stood up. Gardening without magic was harder, but satisfying. She stretched, feeling her spine pop back into place. Ah, that felt good. Stopping to enjoy the little things in life, something far too many people, loopers or not, forgot to do. She glanced up. Huh. About time for lunch. She went to sink to wash the dirt from her hands.

Hopefully Techna was doing alright.

Techna was not doing alright. She was right where Flora had left her, staring at the parts on her workbench.

"Do you want lunch?" Flora tentatively asked.

"Huh? Oh yeah, sure, thank you," Techna said, still staring at the parts.

"Techna," Flora said. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"Fine."

"You've been staring at those parts for hours. If you're worried..."

"Huh? No no, just fine."

"Techna," Flora said, her voice taking on a long-suffering edge. "I am your wife. If you're having a problem, I'd much rather you talk to me about it than stew in your own thoughts."

Techna considered for a moment, before speaking. "Okay, which you think I should make first, the ultimate backwards compatible media player, a magic-powered jet pack, or a plasma toaster?"

Flora blinked. "Um... The toaster, I guess? You're not..."

"Huh?" Techna said. "Not- oh! No, no, just... Everything got destroyed. So now I have so many things I want to build that I have no idea where to start!"

"Oh," Flora said. "Right. Silly me."

"You were really concerned that I'd let what happened put me off of tinkering forever, weren't you?" Techna asked.

"Maybe a little," Flora said. "I was worried about you."

"Thanks, Flora," Techna said. "You mentioned lunch?"

"Coming right up!" Flora said with a smile. It was good to have her beloved Techna back.

37.4 (Awesomedude17)

Timmy knocked on the door, joined by someone he knew would clear up certain issues.

Flora opened the door to see the both of them.

"Flora, we need to talk." Timmy said sternly.

"Namely, your lying." Dante said with a disappointed face.

Flora blinked and suddenly realized what they were talking about.

"Right, come in."

The trio sat down in the living room. An air of somber feelings permeating.

"Flora, why'd you lie to Helia about where you get your ammunition?" Timmy demanded.

"Unless you forgot the trick I showed you..." Dante trailed off.

Flora sighed deeply.

"I can't trust anyone now."

"Excuse me?"

"Techna's Zord exploded when it wasn't a Fused Loop, and if the Trix are right... someone from this Loop tried to destroy Techna's Pocket. I can only trust Techna and myself... I'm scared Timmy. I'm scared Dante. Someone wants to destroy everything we built up and I don't know why."

The two looked on as tears formed in her eyes.

"I've never felt so... helpless."

Timmy closed his eyes.

Dante stared for the longest time.

"Flora, I think you need to stop your crying and remember something I've learned a long time ago."

"What?" She said with reddened eyes.

"You're never alone." The half demon put his hand on her shoulder.

Timmy opened his eyes and stood up. "We're trying our best to investigate. We know that Stella is really focused on getting the truth.

We never believed that Techna was responsible for this for a second. Trust us, because without trust, you won't find out the truth."

Flora looked at both of them and gave a soft, warm smile.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. Do not open your Pocket or put anything in there until this mystery's solved. We don't want a repeat of that moment."

"Right. Thank you."

"Good. Also, remember. Magic the bullets into your guns. It's faster that way." Dante smirked as he and Timmy walked out.

Flora sighed.

She needed to talk to Stella, immediately.

37.5 (Jeanne Summers)

When Sansa Wakes, it is not in her childhood room as she expects. In fact, it is not any room she recognises, so she panics briefly as she scrambles out of the bed.

"Sansa?" The young woman turns, gasping as she spots her sister, (older than she's ever seen her, but definitely Arya) looking just as confused as she feels.

"Arya!" Sansa is relieved to find a familiar face in this strange place.

Across the room in a third bed, an unfamiliar blonde flings her hand out of the bed as if to catch something, tumbling after with a sharp yelp.

Before Sansa can cross the room to see if the stranger needs help, she's overwhelmed by a rush of memories, an entire life not her own.

"Ooh, head rush," Arya's voice reaches her ears through the confusion. "So *that's* what having an entire other life dropped in your head feels like."

It takes Sansa a few seconds. " *Other life!* So you *are* aware of the repeats!" Arya looks startled by the accusation. "I *asked you!* Five times! You said no! You *LIAR* !"

Arya rolled her eyes.

"You probably just missed me. I missed Jon four times before I found out what was going on."

"JON KNOWS TOO!?"

"Oh come on Sansa, it's not like it's that horrid for you. 'oh no, I'm forced to live in a palace and wear pretty dresses and dine with the queen just like I've always wanted.'"

Sansa has had to much practice hiding her emotions to give in to the impulse to slap Arya across the face.

"How *dare* you. Do you have any ide- no, clearly not, or you wouldn't say that. You think it was *fun* for me after father died? Joffrey took me to see father's head on a spike, he made me look at it. That wasn't even the worst thing he did to me. I wasn't *safe!* I wasn't *having fun* ! I was trying not to die in a place where one wrong word means death, where the only thing keeping me alive, is how much people can get from me not dying! While you were off, gallivanting about doing who knows what I was-"

"Who knows what? Certainly not you! The way you talk, it's like you think *I* was safe just because I managed to get out of King's Landing. You have no idea what I had to go through, what I had to do and put up with to survive. Of course, if you hadn't been such a spoiled brat in the first place, none of it would have happened!"

Sansa felt like she'd been slapped.

"You think I don't know I messed up?! I know what I did, and I have tried to fix it, but *nothing I does matters!* I can't do anything to fix things, I've relived it over and over, fourteen times, Arya, three times, I managed to keep us in the North. Three out of fourteen, and I have no idea why it worked when the other times I tried the exact same thing, it doesn't.

"Whether I go South willingly or not, the same things keep happening, nothing I do changes that, so don't you dare say it's my fault. I don't matter enough for it to be completely my fault."

Arya looked like she wanted to hit her then, leap across the space between and attack.

"If I might interject?" The voice is unfamiliar, and coming from the other side of the room. Startled, the sisters look over to the blonde they'd forgotten about. "Hello, I'm Diaspro, it sounds to me like you two are having trouble understanding exactly what the other has gone through." She waves her hand through the air, and suddenly she's holding a box of some sort, a raven and a familiar throne on the side facing them. "I might be able to help with that. Welcome to the Winx Branch by the way. Now Sansa, would you like the explanation of what's going on before or after we work through your familial issues?"

"Before," Sansa did not want to be less informed about the situation than Arya.

"Yggdrasil and the Multiverse 101, then," Diaspro smiled and conjured a screen from the same nowhere as the box.

"That was way better than when I got told, Jon didn't explain it very well, but he was mostly just confiding in his favourite sibling," Arya said, flipping through a brochure, "I liked the pictures."

"Thank you, Bloom did those. This is actually my first time giving the speech, I think I may have over prepared for it, but I wanted to make

sure I didn't mess it up." Diaspro turned to Sansa, "so, thoughts, questions, pillow to scream into as your brain explodes?"

Sansa opened her mouth and closed it several times as words failed her.

"We'll just give her a few moments to wrap her head around everything," Diaspro turned back to Arya, "in the mean time, let's get ready for movie night."

"Movie night?"

"Well I say movie night, really I mean we're going to marathon the Hub recording of your baseline. This will take a few to several days, depending on how many breaks we take and how much sleep we have, but hopefully by the end of it, you two will be able to understand each other's point of view a little better."

Sansa only freaked out a little when she came back to herself, only a little, because she was more relieved she wasn't alone, than she was terrified of what was happening.

("I can't believe Jon told you, every time I ask, he said no or brushed me off."

"Well, I am his favourite.")

Also she was distracted by the wonderfully light and crunchy food called Popcorn.

It was odd to see things, like the television, and know what it was straight away, though there was nothing like it in Westeros.

It was odder still to herself and Arya on the screen.

"...I really don't like the 'Destiny' of Westeros," Sansa said softly.

"Me neither. I'm sorry about what I said," Arya admitted.

"So am I. I think father was right, all those years ago, we need each other."

"The pack survives, the lone wolf dies, and Winter is coming."

The sisters twined their fingers, sitting quietly, hand in hand for a long while.

Diaspro watched, amused, as the Stark sisters played with their new magic. They were both taken with it, Sansa erecting barriers and flying around, Arya stepping in and out of shadows, leaving illusions where ever she pleased.

"You really didn't notice I was Awake?" Sansa frowned at her sister, Arya shrugged in reply.

"Honestly, no... although there were a few times when you were acting a bit... not the way I remember, but I just thought that version of you was cracking under the pressure."

"Cracking under the-" Sansa let out a huff, "some sister you are."

"Jon didn't notice either," Arya whined in defence.

"Well we weren't exactly close, he and I."

"Neither were we."

"I suppose," Sansa let out a long sigh, "even my husband didn't notice. I noticed *he* was acting off."

Sansa let out another sigh as Arya snorted.

"What? Arya?"

"Sorry, just thinking, how long do you think it would take them to notice? Like, not even hiding it, how long?"

"At this rate? Probably a thousand loops."

"Surely someone would notice before that. I mean, as long as you're not hiding it."

The duo stared at each other for two long minutes.

"Want to make it a bet? "

Darkar screamed with fury as the trio of witches ran him in circles, ice, shadow and metal harassing him at every turn.

"What's wrong Darkar?"

"Can't handle a few little girls?"

"And he thought he could take the codex from *our* school?" Three voices laughing at him.

He screamed again and lashed out.

"So how did it go," Flora asked as the witch trio entered the room, laughing and holding onto each other.

"That was brilliant," Arya exclaimed through laughter, "he was all:" she flailed in an effort to illustrate Darkar's reactions.

"Thank you for letting us deal with that," Sansa added, "it was really..." it was her turn to gesticulate, as she searched for the words to explain what she was feeling.

"Well, I'm glad you had fun," Flora smiled.

"So, three years down, four to go," Diaspro said over dinner one evening, Sansa and Arya pausing, "I think now would be a good time to look at some hand to hand combat for the two of you, and a weapon for Sansa."

"But we have magic now," Sansa debated.

"Yes, but magic doesn't always work, and trust me, sometimes you are going to end up facing someone who can wipe the floor with you," Diaspro ran her fingers through her hair in an odd, self comforting gesture. "I actually have a weapon in mind for you I think you might like, it's a very pretty and graceful art."

"Come on Sansa, at least give it a go," Arya said, stealing another spoonful of potatoes.

"Alright, I'll give it a try."

"Yay!"

"But just so you know, I can use knives. Sort of."

"Oh," Diaspro's face lit up with delight, "in that case here." She pulled a wide bracelet from her Pocket and held it out.

"A... bracelet?" Sansa eyed it with confusion.

"Actually," Diaspro pulled and twisted the bracelet just so, "it's a knife." She held it up so the two girls could see it had indeed become a knife.

"I want one," Arya said immediately, eyeing the blade. Diaspro pulled out a second one and tossed it to her, then showed the girl's how to use them.

"Why bracelet knives?"

"I'm a weapon-smith and a jeweller, weaponized jewellery was going to happen at some point, these seemed practical and stylish, so why not?"

The classes Diaspro signed her up for on Earth were... interesting. Tessenjutsu was pretty and graceful as the blonde had promised, and in going to the classes, Sansa had learnt about something amazingly wonderful: yoga pants.

The were soft and stretchy and she had no idea how she had lived without them. She had procured thirteen pairs, and often sat in a window seat, wearing them under the fluffiest bathrobe in the universe, working her way through every flavour of fro-yo to exist.

Arya preferred worn denim and too-large jumpers, but also agreed on the wonder that was frozen yoghurt.

And pizza.

"So we kill Littlefinger before he can talk Lysa into killing Jon Arryn, and see how much that stops."

"Agreed. We also need to do something about the White Walkers, so we should probably start collecting Valyrian steel swords." The plotting sisters turned, startled at the high pitched whine those words prompted.

"Sorry," Diaspro sighed, "I just really want to get my hands on some Valyrian steel. I'm fairly certain I know the physical properties of the metal," she pulled out a sword, the metal of which was a perfect match for Ice's blade, "but I also understand that the blades are spell forged. I mean, I'm sure I could convince the swords to tell me how to make them, backwards engineer the spells-"

Arya and Sansa turned back to their plotting as Diaspro began to ramble about smithing things.

"He was totally checking you out," Arya said with a laugh as she and Sansa entered their dorm room, arms laden down with the things they'd bought on their day out.

"Well it doesn't matter if was, because I am a married woman."

"How long are you going to keep using that as an excuse?"

"As long as I please," Sansa giggled, then stopped. Arya turned slightly to see what had caught her attention.

"Nice light show," she commented to Diaspro, who was drawing in the air, "what is it?"

"Oh, I was just finally getting around to adding you two to my 'family tree.'"

The Stark sisters stepped closer to the display.

"You have a son?"

Diaspro's eye lit up, "would you like to see his baby pictures?"

"I thought loopers couldn't have children," Sansa said, brow creasing in confusion.

"They can't have non-baseline children, I actually looped in as Cloud's mother, so technically, it's more like cosmic babysitting?" The blonde waggled a thick book that suddenly appeared in her hands, "now, baby pictures?"

The look on her face let the sisters know, saying 'no thanks,' wasn't an actual option.

"We'd love to."

"Sansa, What's wrong?" Arya teleported to her sister's side.

"The loops are ending soon, so I was putting things in my Pocket... but it won't all fit. I know I can conjure most of the things... but," Sansa sniffled. "I just really liked this loop, I liked not having to mind myself every second of everyday, I liked getting to know you, be close to you. I even liked my fan classes."

Arya relaxed slowly, she knew what Sansa meant, having to pick and choose what to keep of this loop, and what to lose forever.

"Do you two want to borrow some infinity boxes?" Diaspro asked from the door, "they can hold an infinite amount of stuff, but I would strongly advise against putting to much in, you *will* feel the spiritual bloating. Not fun. But all of that should fit fine until your Pockets develop the space."

"Where do we get some?" Sansa asked, hugging several pairs of her yoga pants tightly.

Diaspro pulled two from her pocket.

"Why do you even have those," Arya wondered, having seen the inside of Diaspro's Pocket.

"I collect things."

Sansa spared a few seconds to hug Diaspro before she began cramming her things in the small box. Arya watched the large pile disappear into the magical artefact, before copying Sansa.

"Just remember, *do not* over fill those, I wasn't kidding about spiritual bloat, it is not a good thing."

When Sansa Awoke in her childhood bedroom, she didn't send out a ping, there was a bet going on after all, but she did send out a magical probe, reaching for the telepathic link Arya had established during their time as members of the Trix.

'I'm Awake,' Arya sent back as she noticed the prodding.

Three pings went off in rapid succession.

'We're not the only ones,' Sansa replied, 'shall we go kill Peter?'

'Yes, let's.'

Something strange was going on, Ned decided. It was a good sort of strange though, he rather enjoyed it. He smiled as his two daughters giggled together in a corner.

"What are you smiling about?" His wife's voice came from beside him, he turned to her and tilted his head towards the girls. Catelyn's eyes lit up as she too began to smile, "it's a miracle, truly we've been blessed."

Even as she joked, Cat felt a flutter of worry. That tiny part of her that had never felt at home in the North tried to speak up, convinced Sansa would be influenced by Arya, rather than Arya being influenced by Sansa, and the sweet little lady she'd been raising would soon be as wild as her sister.

As wild as their aunt had been.

Catelyn slid an arm under her husband's cloak, leaning into his side, squashing the nonsense voice that tried to suggest her eldest daughter would become as much a stranger to her, as her youngest. They were her children, everything would be fine.

37.6 (Awesomedude17)

"-And that sums up what happened to Techna." Stella finished.

"Oh my God, that's horrible!" Tommy Oliver said, shocked.

"I know. I actually came to ask if you had some spare zords for Techna to replace the ones that blew up."

"Of course, but I have to ask. How?"

"Hmm... oh yeah. Apparently, the zords blew up and the Codex within them tried to open a portal. I was so scared, I had no idea what was going to happen."

"It must have been scary. I suppose those were fixed?"

"The Codex is now Read-Only, like those Death Notes. Honestly, I'm kinda paranoid about other powerful things from Alfea and the Magical Dimension."

Tommy sighed.

"Hopefully things get better soon."

"Techna is getting better, for sure... though I noticed Helia has been getting more... how do I say it... withdrawn from everyone else, especially Flora."

Tommy scratched his chin.

"Maybe someone should talk to him."

"Yeah, I guess. I just can't shake the feeling that he's involved somehow."

"Sometimes you're gonna have to trust your gut. In the meantime, let's just go ahead and find solutions."

Stella smiled. "Yeah, you're right."

37.7 (Callii)

Daphne— or 'Danger', her memories filled in for her, which was apparently the custom in this Loop— Awoke standing at a forge. She coughed as the sudden heat hit her in the face, almost dropping whatever she was working on— she fumbled and narrowly avoided dropping it directly onto her foot.

"Careful," said Gobber, watching her with an air of amusement. "Harder to kill dragons with only one foot!" For emphasis, he waved his peg-leg around, doing a little dance.

More dragon-killing, Daphne thought with a sigh. *Maybe I'll see if I can find another way, this time.*

Well, at least it's still alive.

The Sunset Fury she'd shot down gave her the most unamused look she'd ever seen on a draconic face, flipping its tail up (ostensibly to show off the damage Daphne's contraption had done to it, but Daphne recognized the bird when she saw it). It shifted around, allowing the sunlight to play across its shimmering crimson scales, a color which Daphne abruptly realized she'd seen before.

"...oops."

Her currently-draconic little sister snorted a puff of flame and looked pointedly away.

37.8

Helia stared at his notes. Thousands of pages of observations, dozens of experiments, each of which had failed, but taught him something new. He'd checked his conclusion numerous times.

It was possible. It was possible to fix everything. To set the world right again. All he needed was the right loop. All he needed was to

be patient just a little longer, and then he could undo everything that had gone wrong.

He carefully gathered his notes into a single pile. He was done with these. A few more loops and everything would be right again. He snapped his fingers and the pile of paper instantly caught fire, burning to nothing but ash in seconds. Magic was pretty useful, he had to admit, but it was a sacrifice he was willing to make to set things right again.

Now, all he had to do was wait for the right moment.

A/N: Uh oh.

37.1: Most loopers have indeed *seen things* . This is why actual Brain Bleach is served at most looper-run bars.

37.2: Y'know, the fact that they have a holodeck is something the show really could have done a better job of exploring.

37.3: She's back!

37.4: Yeah, that... that sucks. Ouch.

37.5: So, I don't watch Game of Thrones (I know, you can all lynch me later), so I'm not really sure what to say to this. But hey, Diaspro gets to give the Welcome to the Loops Speech! That's cool!

37.6: Not sure how Techna's going to use zords without a morpher, but at least Tommy's got her back.

37.7: ...awkward...

37.8: Well, crap.